

CARPENTER ... KING ... AND THE FACES OF HALLOWEEN

Rod Serling's

NOVEMBER 1982/\$2

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THE TWILIGHT ZONE Magazine

NEW JOURNEYS OF THE IMAGINATION
AND ALWAYS ... THE UNEXPECTED

**HAUNTING! 8 Tales of Halloween
You'll Never Forget**

**JOHN CARPENTER:
Shooting 'The Thing'**

**STEPHEN KING:
'The Evil Dead'**

**HALLOWEEN III:
FULL-COLOR
PREVIEW**

**GAHAN WILSON:
The Spielberg
Phenomenon**

**THOMAS DISCH:
Books for Burning**

**ROD SERLING'S
'A Quality of Mercy'**

**Photo Tour:
Country of the Dead**

**Supernatural Classic:
'LEVITATION'**

NEW HORROR-MOVIE QUIZ!



Rod Serling's
THE **TWILIGHT ZONE** Magazine

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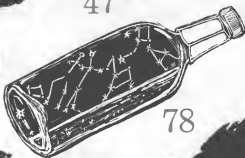
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Garry



Protter



Klein



Lindeman, Hollander, Sun, Mansfield, Monte



Fallon, Despotakis

time for taking them off—which is why, on these pages, we're giving you a look at the folks who bring you *Twilight Zone* each month. Ripping off our masks, so to speak...

Actually, that's a barefaced lie. Halloween has nothing to do with it. The truth is, ever since this magazine began back in April of '81, I've been looking for an excuse to stick a photo of myself here; and now that someone's finally managed



Bayer



Sabat



Landazuri

to take a decent picture of me, Halloween seemed as good a time as any to run it. As an additional treat, we're throwing in pictures of some other members of the TZ staff—the people who, working closely together day after day with only occasional bouts of hysteria or violence, have created the unique publishing phenomenon known as *The Twilight Zone*. Here they are, faceless no more.

—TK

Rod Serling's **THE TWILIGHT ZONE** Magazine

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Screen by Gahan Wilson

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial

(Universal)

Directed by Steven Spielberg

Screenplay by Melissa Mathison

The Thing

(Universal)

Directed by John Carpenter

Screenplay by Bill Lancaster

Poltergeist (MGM)

Directed by Tobe Hooper

Screenplay by Steven Spielberg,
Michael Grais, and Mark Victor

Time was, in bygone days, when movies sold mostly on the strength of their stars. If Clark Gable was the man and Carole Lombard was the woman, folks caught it at the Bijou. If John Wayne and William Holden rode tall in the saddle side by side, people put down a hard-earned buck to see it. And in our special area of interest, how many of us have braved lice-ridden skid row theaters to see yet another awful movie simply because dear old Boris Karloff had consented to hobble or be rolled through it? Many of us, that's how many.

But all this is of another era, or swiftly shall be so—for, thanks to progress, stars are being increasingly replaced by a newer, better product: the *non-human lead*, or, as I like to think of it, the NHL.

It has crept up on us by stages, this NHL, and the innocent, unsuspecting stars have cooperated fully, little realizing that they were participating in their own extinction. Like bank clerks accepting more and more use of electronic calculators, even being grateful to them for the help they gave, right up to the moment they found themselves being replaced by them, actors have cheerfully gone along with the use of more and more makeup and of costumes which increasingly altered, and then concealed entirely, their humanity. None of them spotted substitution as the next logical step.

Subtly, insidiously, the special effects folk began to control *how much* of a given actor was seen by the public, and *in what condition*. One thespian would see himself turned into a blue, wavering flame, those little bits of him that actually



In *E.T.*, Henry Thomas examines a do-it-yourself device with which his extraterrestrial friend has attempted to "call home."

reached the screen; another would find himself reduced to highlights only, and those would be polarized.

But still they agreed and signed contracts which obliged them to wear gear so obscuring that they could be *replaced entirely* by other actors, should this or that happen; and it may be that only now a few of the brighter stars may have truly begun to suspect what's afoot. A kind of quantum leap has finally taken place. The water, heretofore innocently simmering, has come to a full boil. The NHL has arrived and is starring at your local theater.

Historically, E.T. will doubtless be looked back upon as the movie that did it. If there was a convincer, *E.T.* is it. Not only did it dizzy *Variety* with its opening box office sales, but it seems to be a strong continuing seller, and that's what the people with the money—i.e., those who control what is or is not on our screens—keep their eyes on.

E.T. stars an NHL.

It is an excellent NHL, well-constructed and lovable, and as we all grow older and nostalgic we may look back on it with wrinkly smiles and quaver, one old fool to another: "Oh, they knew how to make NHLs back then, you bet—the real thing, the McCoy. Not like the crap you get these days."

The full title of Steven Spielberg's opus is *E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial*, and concerns the adventures, oftentimes perilous, of a little being from another, very different world, trapped for a time in ours. It is thus a kind of mirror image of Alice in *Through the Looking Glass*, one in which we are the bizarre and inexplicable creatures, sometimes kindly, sometimes horribly frightening, but always totally confusing.

A remarkably successful aspect of the movie is that E.T. himself, the little alien, is instantly comprehended, once a good look has been got of him, as exactly what was intended by Spielberg and Melissa Mathison (who has written the best script Spielberg's ever worked with). He is a wise, gentle being of great age, and we are all of us little children unto him in our mental and psychic development. Not a small achievement, Spielberg and Mathison!

Our first glance of E.T. and his fellows and their ship is a fairyland one—and fairies, of course, are what flying saucers are all about. The ship is part Christmas tree ornament, part jack-o'-lantern—nothing like the pompous Hollywood Bowl jukeboxes featured in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*—and it disgorges a gentle crew, dimly seen, none taller than a dog's nose, whose hearts pulse glowingly like fireflies and who are bent on an expedition sublimely harmless: nothing more than a nighttime walk in a California redwood grove with now and then the admiration of a flower or a fern.

Unfortunately, such is the world they've come to that they are suddenly come upon and chased by figures just as dimly seen but much, much bigger, bearing bunches of rattling keys and waving flashlight beams through the mist. E.T. is separated from his fellows and flees, meeping in terror, into—God help us all—a suburb, where he meets, one by one, the children.

Spielberg has a real knack with children, and it serves him well with Mathison's script, which demonstrates her knack with children; and they are both served well by the actual kids playing the roles. The lead kid, and the best one, Henry Thomas, portrays Elliott, the

first to encounter E.T. and the one who grows closest to him, and the interplay between the two of them is oftentimes delightful. My particular favorite scene is fairly early on, when, in an enthusiastic attempt to communicate with his strange new friend, Elliott attempts to explain his world by means of toys in his room, commencing with miniature spacemen and ray guns—which, as he demonstrates by saying “Zap!” and knocking one of the spacemen flat on the table, enable them to kill one another. Then, after a number of mutually confusing diversions, he concludes his little lecture by explaining that the object now in his hand is a peanut which people eat in order to live, but that this particular item is a *plastic* peanut and therefore not to be eaten at all but to put coins in—another demonstration—in order that they may be saved. And all the while E.T. is earnestly trying to follow this babble and anxiously frowning at all the supposedly explanatory objects proffered, including the plastic peanut. My other favorite scene, or shot, rather, is the expression on Elliott’s face when he first hears E.T. call his name over and over: “Elliott! Elliott! Elliott!”

E.T.’s voice, by the way, is a sort of shuffle between electronic effects created by Ben Burt, the *bazzarnk-and-KTCHAOW!!!-meister* of *Star Wars I, II, III*, etc., while for our English-speaking listeners the alien employs Debra Winger, formerly of *Urban Cowboy*, of all things; and if that starts to make it sound as if E.T. exists only because of a small army, readers, it’s because that is the case. I have never seen a longer credit list under the headings of special effects, animation, and so on. There is even—and I was trying to get her name, but my pencil snapped from all the frantic scribbling—a lady credited for E.T.’s eyes; and well she should be, as they are some of his best parts. The whole bunch worked under the generalship of Carlo Rambaldi, who deserves a medal for creative ingenuity and, I am sure, endless patience.

The other actors working with the NHL playing E.T. are Drew Barrymore (yes, of the Barrymores, and a pretty damned good start) as Elliott’s kid sister who, when Elliott

gives her some adult-type bullshit reason for not letting the grown-up world know they’ve got a creature from outer space stashed in Elliott’s room, turns and snarls, “Gimme a break!”; Robert MacNaughton, who plays Elliott’s older brother with just the right amount of older brother head-shaking and older brother heroism; Dee Wallace as their mother, too preoccupied with her husband’s recent splitting off to Mexico with another lady (“He doesn’t even *like* Mexico!” she wails at one point) to notice E.T. stumbling around the kitchen in Elliott’s bathrobe; and Peter Coyote as a scientist who’s dreamed from childhood of meeting an E.T., but is unfortunate enough to have been a grown-up when he does.

The most interesting aspect of E.T. to me, outside of its NHL aspect, is that Spielberg and Mathison, whether on purpose or not, have done a heartbreaking thing: they have achieved in this movie the perfect Walt Disney film, the very one that the Walt Disney organization has desperately been striving to produce for all these many, many years and has failed at. What must the mood be over there at Walt’s place? It has to be utter despair. It’s *got* to be. However, maybe now that they’ve seen how it’s done, they’ll be able to do one, too.

The second NHL show to hit the naves is John Carpenter’s *The Thing*, and, as in *E.T.*, an NHL plays the title role. Unfortunately for Carpenter and the cause of NHLs, *The Thing* doesn’t seem to have that old box office magic. It’s doing okay, understand, but not okay enough, sweetheart.

It’s a pity, because this is by far the best movie Carpenter’s come up with, and the script by Bill Lancaster is far away the best he’s had to work with. It might well be that it’s run into trouble because of all the “so what” remakes of perfectly dandy horror classics which have somewhat pointlessly stalked across the screen of late, culminating with that recent Schrader effort—it’s cute-but-is-it-really-*Cat People*—starring the splitting panthers.

The fact is, this is one oldie but goodie for which there was a perfectly valid reason for a remake. The original, as everyone knows, was

a dandy Howard Hawks production with big Jim Arness as the monster and a swell cast of short people headed by Ken Tobey as the hero. Arness was very nasty and towering throughout, and in spite of their limited stature, the brave crew of the United States Arctic Air Force Base managed to dispatch him neatly and permanently at the end, to everyone’s great satisfaction.

But this was *not* the story it was based on, which was written under a pseudonym by the science fiction editor John W. Campbell, Jr. (possibly in the hope that his authors wouldn’t notice he’d bought one of his own stories) and which had as its basic premise the idea that the Thing could take any form it wished, so that you couldn’t tell it from a malamute or your Uncle Henry, depending on which one it had eaten. Hawks’s Thing had no such ability at all, so why not make a new movie wherein it did?

Also, for what was really the first time, the application of new and advanced special effects technology to an old but entirely successful classic made sense. Val Lewton’s subtle misdirections worked beautifully and satisfyingly in the original *Cat People* and needed no gussying up, and the plant creatures of *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* underwent no particular improvement by being presented in color and far more numerous; but the transformations required if one was to bring off Campbell’s shape-changer were really too much for the cinematic magicians of the fifties (although I bet Lewton could have pulled it off with his brand of hocus-pocus), so Hawks was probably wise to say the hell with it.

We, lucky us, are in the explicit eighties, and with the likes of Rob Bottin to design it, Roy Arbogast to supervise it, and Albert Whitlock to handle the special visual effects (you’ll note my pencil point held up this time), the Thing à la Campbell could not only stalk but do a little dance tune if this struck its fancy, and it does all that and more in Carpenter’s production.

Another change, and a slightly depressing one, is in the sort of folks we have manning polar bases in movies these days. It’s true that this one is in the Antarctic, unlike Hawks’s gang, and that they’re

civilians instead of air force, but, by God, the bunch in this '82 *Thing* could really use a good talking to from Ken Tobey's Captain Hendry! Drunk out of their skulls—I mean, the head hero is at *least* a quart-a-day man—smoking pot, saying words I'd hesitate to print in this family magazine: it really makes a body wonder. I think if Jim Arness had shown up in front of this lot of toughies with his super-carrot makeup, they'd have spat at him.

So it's a good thing Carpenter's provided them with something really diverting—which he has. With the help of Messrs. Bottin, Arbogast, and Whitlock, this *Thing* can do just about anything it wants to. Great fun is derived from the idea that it can't change into Toto or Auntie Em just like snap, but has to have a little time to work on them to get the transformation just right. As first try at Toto's face, say, might have a couple of extra noses, and while parts of it may be excellent simulated fur, other sections might tend from merely slimy all the way to pure gick.

There are also some amusing little sight gags, reminding me of certain of my own efforts in the cartoon field. One involves what happens to the doctor, but I won't tell lest I spoil it for you. Another will still be effective if I whisper that it involves an ultragrotesque spider effect.

There is real tension among the drunkards of the camp as they begin to wonder more and more which among them is another drunkard and which is a whatsis, and the revelations are invariably shocking. The test used to determine who's which is taken from the original Campbell tale, I believe, and involves a squeaking drop of blood—something really new in horror movies.

Throughout the film there are friendly little tributes to, and jokes about, the original production: the title is the same burn-away number as the original, and the discovery and messing up of the alien ship are, by a clever script gimmick, handled in black and white in exactly the same way as Hawks did.

This last, however, presents an incongruity which makes Carpenter's *Thing* seem a little inconsistent: it arrives in a flying saucer of the same general type as Hawks's—a



"A brave little family..." A young couple in *Poltergeist* (Craig T. Nelson and Jobeth Williams) are mystified by the force that draws their daughter (Heather O'Rourke) to the family television set.

sort of spread-out fighter bomber, rivets, vents and all. But it is altogether the wrong sort of vehicle for this blobby, shifty fiend. A rigid spaceship with hatches of fixed dimensions is quite appropriate for James Arness's vegetable, but a thing along the lines of Carpenter's would surely have evolved a far more flexible vehicle, an *outré* object suggesting soft sculpture, perhaps, or a congeries of bubbles.

The end has a nice ironic mood to it—again, it seems that the alien invaders of '82 would find Earth a much more complicated planet than those of '50—and while some in the theater seemed unhappy with it (another reason it may be faltering in sales), my group was in no way displeased. One wonders what the filmic Martian will encounter on our planet thirty-two years hence!

Poltergeist is not an NHL movie, but more of non-human-extra or NHE job. And not very effective NHE's either, I'm sorry to say—but then, that's of a piece with the mood of the whole chaotic production.

I think what happened is that producer Steven Spielberg and director Tobe Hooper (who shall always hold a special niche in my heart for having put together *the* great American drive-in classic, *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*) and a whole bunch of other people spent far too long at the conference table. Both Spielberg and Hooper are good, and they have an excellent cast, and so the thing bounces along, but not from beginning to end, only zigzag, this way and that, until it lurches to a halt no place in particular, dead with its feet up in the air.

The main problem with *Poltergeist* is that nobody ever

seems to have been able to come to any conclusion as to what the whole bunch of non-human-extras were trying to *do*. I think everybody saw *The Amityville Horror* and agreed that they could do a much better job with it, but they should really have gotten a little more distance from their inspiration. Having the closet in the kids' bedroom as a central issue, and horrible-looking toys that move, and a brave little family that just barely haul themselves into the car and flee into the night at the end never to return is really just a little bit thick, folks.

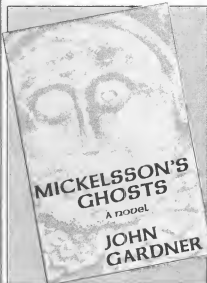
Anyhow, *Poltergeist* starts out, as its title implies, as a poltergeist movie. But then it slides off into being a ghost movie, complete with a wispy lady floating down the stairs, just like in *The Uninvited*; then it lurches over into something or other about extradimensional space and "The Beast" (so as, I gather, not to let diabolism lie fallow); and then we wind up with a chorus of rotting cadavers. And that's not all, for I have yet to mention the boy-eating tree, and the unconvincing giant head, and the enormous skinned poodle, among other wonders. My God, what a bergain! My God, what a mess.

The cast is, as I said, quite good, and it seems a great pity to see them flailing around in all that goo. The family is swell; Jobeth Williams is a great mother, Craig T. Nelson's a first-rate father, and from the way Oliver Robbins and Heather O'Rourke play their kids, it's obvious they've been brought up with love and intelligence. On top of that we have Beatrice Straight and Zelda Rubinstein as a markedly contrasting pair of psychic investigators, and a talented, hard-working crew of minor players who, despite the lurching, staggering script and the everything-but-the-kitchen-sink-and-what-the-hell-let's-toss-in-the-kitchen-sink approach, actually do make you manage to feel for them. At least, that is, until they're literally buried under accumulations of tacky-looking cadavers consisting of Hershey's chocolate syrup poured over identical plastic skeletons dressed in different clothes from Grandma's attic; and then you realize, in spite of all your best intentions, that they're just a bunch of actors stuck with a bumner of a movie. 17

Books

by Thomas M. Disch

Annually at sunset on August 22 (the great man's birthday), editors, book reviewers and workers in related trades celebrate the Feast of St. Bradbury. On that day they gather up all the books they have been unable, despite their best intentions and firmest resolves, to read all the way to the end, tie them in bundles, and take them to local book-burning facilities. There amid cries of "Boring!" "Pretentious!" "Trashy!" and "Inept!" they roast wieners and barbecue chickens over the offending volumes and experience that sweet *tristesse* peculiar to the Feast of St. Bradbury: that mingling of relief at the onerous task at last abandoned—and horror that so many writers have written and publishers published in vain, all in vain.



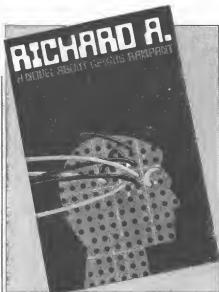
This August 22 it was my great pleasure to incinerate John Gardner's intolerably prolix *Mickelsson's Ghosts* (Knopf, \$16.95). I know of no contemporary writer whose achievement is more widely at variance with his reputation, no one who can be more reliably counted on to produce a turkey to barbecue *every* August 22. Gardner writes precisely the sort of over-earnest, symbol-laden tome that

is to the college writers' workshop what the Model A was to Detroit. I can imagine no one reading *Mickelsson's Ghosts* with pleasure except the more plodding students of Creative Writing, whose faith in the eventual triumph of the patient imitation of approved models finds in Gardner a kind of messiah. Ordinarily, Gardner's books would not come within the purview of this column, but this year his lit-crit paradigm is the Jamesian ghost story, and ghost stories are *Twilight Zone's* bread and butter. So naturally, when one of the bigger fish of the mainstream has a go at a ghost story, it's worth asking if the genre has been transcended.

The answer is that it wasn't even broached. Gardner's ghosts evidence as little life as his other follow-the-dots characters. All that can be said in their favor is that they don't deliver lectures on the Great Philosophers. If only by virtue of its inordinate length, this may be Gardner's dullest book yet. Into the flames with it!

Richard A. by Sol Yurick (Arbor House, \$14.95) is not so determinedly dull and decorous as John Gardner's magnum opus. It does sincerely intend to entertain. Early reviews in *PW* and the *New York Times* made it sound temptingly like such prime Richard Condon left-liberal spine-tinglers as *The Manchurian Candidate* or *Mile-High*, a heady brew of nuclear brinkmanship, cabals within cabals, and a hero who gets into heavy water by tapping the phone of the girl who's jilted him and, through her phone, to others all the way to the Oval Office. All this tied up with the ribbon of a subtitle promising "A Novel About Genius Rampant."

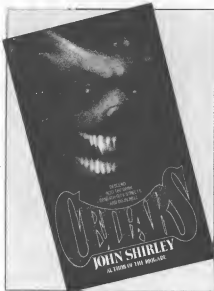
The book does deliver pretty much what its package promises. Why, then, any time I settled down to read for fun, did I always turn to other books for that purpose? I started in on Goldman's *Control* (reviewed here last month) at the



same time and breezed right through it. Why? Goldman's basic premise was less promising and marginally sillier. The difference was entirely one of tone and temperament. Yurick's prevailing emotional tone is dour and occluded; Goldman's bright and sharp-edged. However, that may be saying no more than I don't like it because I don't like it. One man's dour and occluded can be another's Kafkaesque. So let me offer a specimen paragraph (from page 103, near where I finally bogged down the last time) as evidence for the prosecution:

Suddenly Kelley had a mad desire for real love. What a silly, pedestrian, childlike thing to want. Danger lay in that direction. "If I cease to desire and remain still, the Empire will be of peace of its own accord," Kelley thought. If personal desire overcome him, chaos would follow. Great men's uncontrollable passions ... [Author's ellipses here and below.] They mistook their cocks for weaponry and the intensity of their orgasms for policy. Worse if the passions were directed exclusively at women. Heterosexual love brings on war and children ... squandered ching instead of huan ching pu nao—making the semen return to nourish the brain. Squander ching and you try to make it up by a substitute ... political power, money, Laura, though, she took the semen of innumerable men into herself and strengthened her blood. She understood it.

The Kelley of that paragraph is supposed to be an accomplished villain running a SMERSH operation with goals so Machiavellian as to seem Satanically visionary. However, as transcribed by Yurick, his thoughts are a mish-mash of occult catch-phrases and reified psycho-babble in the mold of Norman Mailer. Since I doubt this combination would allow anyone to rise to heights of success in villainy or any other occupation, I'm inclined to experience such a passage as an obstacle to vicarious entertainment. Stripped of its intrusively dumb ideas and colored by the human presence of live actors, I might enjoy the movie of *Richard A.*, as I enjoyed the movie, summer before last, made from Yurick's *The Warriors*. But as for the book, it's only paper. Burn it.



I also suggest burning *Cellars* by John Shirley (Avon, \$2.75), though, as it's a paperback, it will yield at most only enough heat to roast some marshmallows. Shirley is a young writer with some good stories to his credit—and a string of paperback books none of which is an entire success and some of which, like *Cellars*, are godawful. Since Shirley is not so canny a writer as Yurick, it's easier to pinpoint the godawful element. Indeed, he helpfully provides the key in the book's epigraph, which is drawn from the lyrics to one of his own songs. (Under another hat Shirley is the head of a punk rock group called Obsession.)

Lucifer's hands divide the lobes of my brain

I paid a hundred bucks to be temporarily insane

And for the pleasure that's like a

thundering symphony

All the while it makes a joke of me

And the sage remembers the hidden thing.

Machen said: "True Evil is a rose that sings..."

True Evil is a rose that sings

When my tissues howl with

microscopic red lips

And my nerves vibrate in their cellular crypts

Evil is a rose that sings...

The tell-tale elements there are the willingness to fill a blank space with any cliché that comes to mind ("like a thundering symphony"), an

urge to dress the text up with portentous guff, like the window of a back-street Reader and Advisor ("And the sage remembers..."), a merciless determination to recycle said guff (True Evil is... what's that again?), and an emotional sympathy lavished exclusively upon the first person singular. To these attractions the novel proper adds a couple wheelbarrowfuls of standard-issue spatter-movie grue ("A woman spread-eagled on her back. Her blouse had been torn away... Her breasts had been symmetrically quartered like fruit sections in a salad."), and a misogynic regard for the fair sex to a degree that makes Mickey Spillane look like a radical feminist—all smoothed over with mystic mummeries so false they're probably intended as comic relief, as when our hero explains to the Keystone Cops the killing style associated with the mayhem quoted above: "The lettering on the circle looks like ancient Persian to me, and I suspect the ritual has something to do with the demon Ahirman." Ah so!

So it goes, the grue alternating with the hokum for 295 pages of prose that is eighty-five percent pulp padding and fifteen percent amplified scream. There is, I will admit, an aesthetic to screaming, and Shirley's shriller screams can get to your crystal ware, but screaming is, as a general rule, less effective on the printed page than in rock music, where the silly lyrics are blessedly incomprehensible and

the beat goes on. Novels, alas, don't have a rhythm section to keep them moving—so when the pages refuse to turn: burn, baby, burn.

Battlefield Earth by L. Ron Hubbard (St. Martin's Press, \$24.00) is to other, ordinary dumb books what a Dyson sphere is to an ordinary lampshade—awesomely much bigger, though not different in kind. Page by page, it's about on a par with the latest ersatz quest-adventure by Philip Jose Farmer or with most hack writing of the pulp era—the Golden Age as it is known to those who were young then (as what age is not?). Which is to say it's about what you'd expect from the author of *Slaves of Sleep* if, instead of leading a religion for the last thirty years, he'd been cryogenically frozen, then

resurrected and given a year to produce the longest dime novel of all time—one that contains, as Hubbard writes in his introduction, "practically every type of story there is—detective, spy, adventure, western, love, air war, you name it. All except fantasy; there's none of that."

A book will usually let you know if it's meant for burning within the first few pages, and *Battlefield Earth's* seven pages of introduction are a little treasury of self-incriminations. Here's Hubbard on his early career: "I was what they called a high-production writer, and these fields were just not big enough to take everything I could write." And: "I had, myself, somewhat of a science background, had done some pioneer work in rockets and liquid gases, but I was studying the branches of man's past knowledge at that time to see whether he had ever come up with anything valid." Then, a little later, on these same themes of science and intellectual history: "But I do notice that every time modern science thinks it is down to the nitty-gritty of it all, it runs into (and sometimes adopts) such things as the Egyptian myths that man came from the mud, or something like that." And finally for sheer reverse verbal bravura, observe the following pronouncement: "... man, currently, has sunk into a materialistic binge."

Battlefield Earth is such a cornucopia of boners, groaners, and

macro-cliches (such as the ineffably klutzy destruction of the planet of the evil Psychlos by atomic bombs, which turn it into a "radioactive sun") that many readers may be tempted to spare it from the flames of St. Bradbury and place it on that shelf of the immortally goofy anti-classics of the genre, such as *Zarlah the Martian* and *The Bell from Infinity*. Despite all this, or maybe because of it, I'll wager that *Battlefield Earth* will be a strong contender at Hugo time. If not, what are disciples for?

It should be noted that nowhere in the introduction or the press releases for *Battlefield Earth* is the word *Scientology* used. The nearest Hubbard comes to frankness is this: "Some of my readers may wonder that I did not include my own serious subjects in this book. It was with no thought of dismissal of them. It was just that I put on my professional writer's hat. I also did not want to give anyone the idea I was doing a press relations job for my other serious works." To his credit, those parts of the book I read seemed no more partisan on behalf of Scientology than, say, C. S. Lewis's trilogy is on behalf of the Anglican church. An allegorical interpretation is possible in both cases, but the reader is not being overtly recruited.

If there is one key to prejudging books and consigning them, half-read, to the holiday holocaust, it must be Style, and Style is the single word most likely to provoke hack writers and hack readers to postures of defense. Story-telling and yarn-spinning are simple, wholesome crafts, they would aver, to which questions of Style are irrelevant. Style is to be left to stylists, like Hemingway or Faulkner or Joyce, the writers you have to read in school.

Nonsense. Style is simply a way of handling yourself in prose so as to signal to an attentive reader that he is in the presence of someone possessed of honesty, wit, sophistication, irony, compassion, or whatever other attributes one looks for in a person to whom one is about to give over n-many hours of one's mental life. People who insist otherwise usually have mental halitosis.

Which is why I think it's fair,

once a year, for reviewers to indicate which books they have found unreadable. Otherwise the longest, dullest, worst books would only be reviewed by people able to read them, i.e., unable or unwilling to recognize their gross defects. Only creative writing teachers

would review John Gardner. Only Scientologists and veterans of the Golden Age would review *Battlefield Earth*. Only the authors' friends would review Richard A. or *Cellars*. And publishers would come to think that no one ever actually noticed what they were doing. **W**

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great characters—a
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The 'Heroes & Heavies' Quiz

compiled by
Kathleen Murray

It has been said that one of the reasons we find the horror and fantasy genres so comforting is that their conflicts are usually black and white—clear-cut examples of good versus evil. In films, this has made for some great combinations of actors. Match the heroes and victims in column one with their evil adversaries in column two, and name the film they appeared in. 25 or more correct, you're in a class with Richard Corliss and David Denby; 16 to 24, Canby and Sarris; 11 to 15, Kael and Maslin; 10 or less, Ebert and Siskel (God help you).

Answers on page 17.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. Kenneth Tobey | A. Tom Tyler |
| 2. Tom Conway | B. David Warner |
| 3. Leslie Nielsen | C. Boris Karloff |
| 4. Ralph Bellamy | D. Dean Stockwell |
| 5. Henry Hull | E. Lon Chaney, Jr. |
| 6. Robert Lowery | F. Warner Oland |
| 7. Joanna Moore | G. Margaret Hamilton |
| 8. Duane Jones | H. James Arness |
| 9. Richard Arlen | I. Peter Wyngarde |
| 10. Lee Tracy | J. Vincent Price |
| 11. Deborah Kerr | K. Naughton Wayne |
| 12. Basil Radford | L. Jack Nicholson |
| 13. Dana Andrews | M. Simone Simon |
| 14. Peter Wyngarde | N. Akim Tamiroff |
| 15. Robert Hutton | O. Arthur Franz |
| 16. Dick Foran | P. George Zucco |
| 17. Turhan Bey | Q. Katherine Emery |
| 18. Miriam Hopkins | R. Walter Pidgeon |
| 19. Boris Karloff | S. Jean Brooks |
| 20. Kim Hunter | T. Charles Laughton |
| 21. Rod Cameron | U. Tim Curry |
| 22. Barry Bostwick | V. Laird Cregar |
| 23. Richard Pasco | W. Rondo Hatton |
| 24. Steve Forrest | X. Ray "Crash" Corrigan |
| 25. Malcolm McDowell | Y. John Fraser |
| 26. Jack Nicholson | Z. Margaret Johnston |
| 27. Frank Morgan | AA. Russell Streiner |
| 28. Marshall Thompson | BB. Fredric March |
| 29. Scatman Crothers | CC. Ricou Browning |
| 30. George Sanders | DD. Karl Malden |
| 31. Frank Lovejoy | EE. Larry Gates |
| 32. Kevin McCarthy | FF. Preston Foster |
| 33. Richard Carlson | GG. Philip Terry |
| 34. Ed Begley | HH. Barbara Shelley |
| 35. John Neville | II. Niall MacGinnis |



War in Fantasyland

by Baird Searles



Fantasy reader, let me break it to you gently—the fantasy viewer is among us! A rival breed of fantasy addict, born in the last decade, has begun already to alter the course of history.

You see, until recently, the craving for fantasy perforce had to be filled by the printed page. In fact, until the midpoint of this century, the individual reader could easily keep up on everything published, even reading across the board all that was released in the three main subdivisions of fantasy—science fiction, the supernatural, and pure fantasy. The last-named category didn't even really exist; aficionados in 1950 had their choice of about ten books, most of which were out of print. Conan and the Gray Mouser were literally back numbers, lost in the pulpy pages of *Unknown* and *Weird Tales* to be found in dingy back-date magazine stores; Lovecraft shared the same fate; Dunsany was very out of fashion as well as out of print. And asking for an Arkham House book* in a regular bookstore might well get you a suggestion to try a religious bookstore.

About all you had to fall back on was an odd little book from England called *The Hobbit*, which librarians viewed with deep suspicion because it was unclassifiable: too long for a fairy tale but certainly not a novel because it was about elves.

There were the pulp magazines, of course. The handful devoted to fantasy had resounding names such as *Famous Fantastic Mysteries*. Even better were the titles of those that printed only sf: *Startling Stories*, *Amazing Stories*, *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, and my all-time favorite, *Stirring Science Stories*!

When the pulps died, the paperback book inherited the earth, and more and more material was published. Only a reading wizard could keep up with everything that came out, and it was actually possible to meet another devotee of

fantasy who had read books that you hadn't. Nevertheless this flood of stuff, guaranteed to sate the most desperate addict, was still confined to the printed page.

But you can divide the world into two groups: the people who read and the people who don't. I don't mean the illiterate. I mean those who are perfectly capable of reading but to whom it would never occur to pick up a book. Now that *modus vivendi* is downright unnerving to the average bibliophile, who just can't accept the fact that a nonreader can be intelligent, pleasant, civilized, and even well informed.

Of course if, in midcentury or earlier, you craved fantasy but also were of the segment that simply wasn't into reading, you had a real problem.

The movies weren't much help. Fantasy in the movies, with some exceedingly rare exceptions, came in two varieties—horrific and cute, the weird and the whimsical. Horror films, even the few made with some care in the 1930s, were not long on large-scale special effects or the logic that gives true fantasy its strength, and they were soon consigned to the category of B movies—all those messily wrapped mummies staggering through swamps carrying negligently neglected heroines, chased by crowds of Bavarian peasants waving sticks and hoes. And countless mad scientists, siphoning off someone's blood of eternal life.

If possible, the more whimsical flicks were even worse. Concocted on the theory that fantasy meant childishness, their characters behaved in a manner that can only be described as retarded, particularly when confronted with something out of the ordinary. This could be the lackwit leprechaun in *The Luck of the Irish*, who follows a hapless journalist home to New York and confuses his life utterly by

acting as his butler. Or Dean Stockwell in *The Boy with Green Hair*, who has social problems because his hair has achieved a color somewhere between lime and slime. (Stockwell later achieved screen immortality by propping the *Neonomicon* in Sandra Dee's crotch in *The Dunwich Horror*.) And how about those heavenly messengers sent down to muck up some poor mortal's life, as Cary Grant did in *The Bishop's Wife*? These films offered, along with whimsy, moral messages, and were generally tiresome in the extreme.

Perhaps the only really serious fantasy to be seen on the screen during that whole period was Disney's *Fantasia*, and despite the splendor of its fantasy imagery (unicorns! demons! dinosaurs! even elves!), it was a little short on plot.

But the winds of change were rising. Year by year fantasy and science fiction became more and more popular. And when television entered our lives, it generally followed the lead of the big screen in fantasy, with whimsical talking horses, whimsical genies, whimsical flying nuns, and, of course, whimsical angels.

A new sensibility surfaced with the advent of television's *The Twilight Zone*. This program was not confined to whimsy; it ran the gamut of fantasy from robots to reincarnation, and it actually used logic as an ingredient. Longtime readers of fantasy and sf tended to regard the show as obvious and predictable, but conceded that it was a vast improvement over what had come before. It reached a great many other people, too, especially the nonreaders with a yen for fantasy and, above all, children, who found the kind of excitement that readers had found in their first Edgar Rice Burroughs novel or *Planet Stories*. The themes of *The Twilight Zone* bore about as much resemblance to what had gone

*Arkham House was the first publisher specializing in fantasy, initially established to publish the works of Lovecraft after his death. AH books were printed in small numbers and very hard to find.

before as the children in *The Village of the Damned* did to the earlier inhabitants of Midwich.

Other series indicative of this new sensibility followed, but the next major manifestation was a show that was to prove one of the most extraordinary phenomena in the history of television: it was, of course, *Star Trek*. It was an amazing accomplishment, for its time and even now. It may look a little underproduced to us, now that we've seen so many subsequent marvels; all too often their alien planet was merely a familiar boulder-strewn landscape, but *Star Trek* had the epic implications of a vast and ongoing universe of wonders that readers had discovered in authors as diverse as Tolkien and E. E. Smith. This was a first for the screen, big or little. And it hooked tens of thousands of people who needed that sense of wonder. They might not have known Robert E. Howard from Howard Phillips Lovecraft, but they knew what they wanted.

Fantasy readers had never been passive; their energy had manifested itself consistently in such actions as cataloguing every issue of every pulp magazine, listing all the people, places, and things in Tolkien, and making maps of Barsroom. This passion and energy surfaced immediately with the new breed of viewers. The major problem was that there was only one focus for this—three seasons of one show about one universe.

The viewers attempted to fill in every corner of that universe, as well as noting every nuance of every episode, down to the last lift of Spock's eyebrow. Readers had by this time countless stories of countless worlds to feed on and build on; for a decade the viewers had only one, which accounts for the *Star Trek* phenomenon.

The culture clash of which I speak began in that decade. It was characterized by the transformation of the science fiction convention, which had until then been cozy little affairs devoted to the adoration of authors by readers. Suddenly the viewers invaded. The huckster rooms, formerly confined to selling flaking copies of *Thrilling Wonder Stories*, filled up with *Star Trek* paraphernalia. And the authors

getting the adoration were usually those who'd been fortunate enough to write an episode of *Star Trek*. The word *trekkie* became a pejorative. The lines had been drawn.

How long the viewers could have lived on reruns of *Star Trek* is an interesting question; they were saved from that fate by *Star Wars*. History repeated itself; the entire *Star Trek* phenomenon condensed itself around *Star Wars* in a shorter space of time. But the media folk had gotten the message; there was gold in them thar stars. The viewer was a viable mass market, and the rest is history. *Close Encounters!* *Alien!* *Excalibur!* *Empire!* *Buck!* *Flash!* *Battlestar Galactica!* *Conan!* *Heart Beeps!* (*Heart Beeps?*) The viewers had enough material to build their own subculture, and did so, with their own magazines (mostly pictures, of course), organizations, and conventions. The conventions now try for the best of both worlds, readers and viewers, but it's painfully obvious that the major area of interest is the screen, not the printed page.

So we have two fantasy cultures. They aren't totally separate; there's a lot of overlap. Readers certainly keep up on the films and television shows, usually with the attitude that the concepts are old-fashioned and the visions nowhere near as good as what can be conjured from the printed page. Viewers pick up a book now and then, more often than not the novelization of a movie, or that odd new literary subgenre, the novel about characters from a movie (*Han Solo* and *The Lost Legacy*), or that even odder nonbook thing, the photo novel.

Each culture also breaks down into subcategories. As proprietor of the Science Fiction Shop in Manhattan, I see more fantasy and sf readers in a week than most authors and editors see in a year, and I'm eternally fascinated by the types that tend toward certain authors.

There are the Bradbury ladies, who always have lots of unbound hair, if they're not named Deirdre, they should be, and look incomplete without an armful of calla lilies. Marion Zimmer Bradley's readers, curiously enough, tend to look like Marion Zimmer Bradley—can she be sending out clones to buy her books?

Readers of Michael Moorcock tend to be disheveled and overwrought, probably from the lifelong strain of keeping up on the various permutations of Jerry Cornelius and Elric.

On the other hand, it is the sheerest calumny that the knuckles of all Conan fans reach the floor when they stand erect, or that they all have one eyebrow straight across and hair on their palms. They do, however, tend to trip over their swords while browsing.

One can be surprised, though. There was the gentleman dressed entirely in black leather and chains, who parked his motorcycle outside (thank goodness), and clanked and jangled around the Shop for an hour. What did he end up buying? No, not the *Gor* books. A complete set of the *Narnia* books.

I write a monthly film review column, so there is contact with the viewing community as well. Their subspecies are more general. One type is hung up on '50s monster movies (their mothers went to *The Thing* while carrying them) and wants to discuss the subtle points of the relationship between Godzilla and Rodan. Another is the *au courant* maniac, who tells you about audience reaction to the sneak preview of *Revenge of the Jedi* at a Texas drive-in and claims to have seen dailies from the upcoming musical version of *The Silmarillion*. And, of course, the special-effects freak, who refers to his passion as FX and hates all actors as noisy distractions from the real point of the movie, which is blowing up another planet or a dragon whose ichor is more real than the last one.

But overall the major division is between reader and viewer, and they are two very different heads. The reader gets his fantasy through the printed word, involving a certain intellectual process. The viewer gets his more directly to the senses, through vision, drama, and action. The reader categorizes, and makes a sharp distinction between science fiction, pure fantasy, and the supernatural. To the viewer, it's all fantasy that may take place in the future, the past, or just someplace else.

To the reader, logic and consistency are all; lapses are as painful as a toothache. The viewer



takes a few holes in his stride; life itself isn't all that logical, so that makes the fantasy more real. That's logical, isn't it?

As usual, it's a shock when a new development simply turns out to be a variation on an old, old pattern. And what we have here is once more the division of an area of human endeavor into Apollonian and Dionysian, a dichotomy discovered long ago that seems to apply to almost everything. It's the classic and romantic, it's the head and the heart, it's stuff and nonsense (in the best sense), it's matter and manner. The Apollonian is the intellectual, the conservative, the clear vision of Phoebeus. The Dionysian is the sensuous, the mystical, the orgiastic frenzy of Bacchus.

This division has caused disputes up to and including full-scale wars

over the centuries. While machine guns have not yet appeared among the ranks of fantasy lovers, there's sure been a lot of sniping, dating as far back as the appearance of *2001: A Space Odyssey* when the sf establishment was horrified at "that acid trip disguised as science fiction" (as one said to me), and rather unpleasant to those who thought it great. The sniping has been mostly from the readers' side; they are the Old Guard. I'm sure the term *trekkies* was first sneered by one as he barely escaped being trampled at a convention by a horde who had sighted Nichelle Nichols. And where *2001* was too radical, *Star Wars* was merely a pastiche of old ideas jazzed up with some gaudy effects.

The viewers are too recent to have that kind of tradition from

which to return fire (though get the reaction of one if you claim to be a fantasy devotee but admit to not having seen *Clash of the Titans*). But though newer, they are far from fewer, and there are millions more on the way, to judge from the taste of the subteen crowd.

So the printed word may just lose its future creative talents and energy to the big and little screens; I can think of several cases where it's happened already. Now there's something to man the barricades about.

Misunderstanding and, perhaps, conflict are likely among the divided devotees; readers and viewers use different media to stretch their minds. But we are all after a single goal—that orgasm of the imagination known as the sense of wonder. **17**

Answers to The 'Heroes & Heavies' Quiz

1-H Hawksian hero Tobey confronted Arness's alien plant-man in the original version of *The Thing* (1951). 2-M Conway's lecherous but well-meaning psychiatrist met his match when Simon turned feline in the Val Lewton-Jacques Tourneur *Cat People* (1942). 3-R Pidgeon exercised his id to drive Nielsen and his men from *Forbidden Planet* (1956). 4-E The oddly cast Bellamy played a British policeman to Chaney's lycanthropic Larry Talbot in *The Wolf Man* (1941). 5-F Hull's upright botanist became the *Werewolf of London* (1935) when bitten by Oland's inscrutable "Dr. Ogrami." 6-W Hero Lowery stood up to the giant Hutton, of "Creepier" fame, in *House of Horrors* (1946). 7-O Franz's Neanderthal throwback growled for Moore in *Monster on the Campus* (1958). 8-AA Streiner, among the first to turn zombie, came back to menace Jones and other holdouts in *Night of the Living Dead* (1968). 9-T Mad scientist Laughton, as Wells's Dr. Moreau, planned to mate shipwrecked Arlen with a panther woman in *Island of Lost Souls* (1933). 10-FF Tracy's wisecracking reporter unmasked Foster as "the Full Moon Killer" in *Doctor X* (1932). 11-I Wyngarde's ghostly Quint spooked Kerr's repressed governess and her charges in *The Innocents* (1961), based on Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw." 12-K Radford's cheating golfer wound up with permanent ghostly companion Wayne in the golf episode of *Dead of Night* (1946), an early anthology film. 13-II Originally a skeptic, Andrews became the target of MacGinnis's sorcery in *Curse of the Demon* (1958), based on M. R. James's "Casting the Runes." 14-Z Faculty wife Johnston, a secret witch, sought to cut short Wyngarde's academic career—and life—in *Burn, Witch, Burn!* (1962), based on Fritz Leiber's *Conjure Wife*. 15-N Tamiroff, as a half-man, half-raptor, scared the normally unflappable Hutton in *The Vulture* (1967). 16-A Former cowboy star Tyler resented archaeologist Foran's invasion of his privacy in *The Mummy's Hand* (1940). 17-P Loonv scientist Zucco tried to

eliminate love-rival Bey by creating a zombie in *The Mad Ghoul* (1943). 18-BB March's simian Mr. Hyde murdered pub singer Hopkins—and won an Oscar—as Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde (1931). 19-Q Karloff, as a martinet officer, met his doom at the hands of the catatonik Emery in *Isle of the Dead* (1945). 20-S Searching Greenwich Village for her missing sister, Hunter ran afoul of devil-worshiper Brooks in *The Seventh Victim* (1943). 21-GG Policeman Cameron combed the big town for a gorilla animated by Terry's avenging brain in *The Monster and the Girl* (1941). 22-U Curry's transvestite Dr. Frank N. Furter played horny host to Bostwick's hapless honeymooner in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975). 23-HH A snake-haired Shelley tried to turn Pasco to stone in *The Gorgon* (1964). 24-DD Madman Malden sicked his ape on rival Forrest in *Phantom of the Rue Morgue* (1954). 25-B McDowell's H. G. Wells pursued Warner's Spring-Heel Jack in *Time After Time* (1979). 26-C Nicholson's Confederate soldier found Karloff an inhospitable host in *The Terror* (1963). 27-G Morgan, in the title role, proved a weak ally against Hamilton's Wicked Witch in *The Wizard of Oz* (1939). 28-X Thompson's spaceship had an unwelcome passenger in proto-Alien Corrigan in *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* (1958). 29-L Crothers's telepathic gifts availed him little against a maniacal Nicholson in *The Shining* (1981). 30-V Cregar's Ripper attempted to make Merle Oberon victim number six, but was stopped by stalwart Sanders in *The Lodger* (1944). 31-J Lovejoy's old-time New York cop shut down Price's chamber of horrors in *House of Wax* (1953). 32-EE Gates's pod-possessed psychiatrist pursued a freethinking McCarthy in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956). 33-CC Browning, in fins and scales, made life difficult for Carlson in *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954). 34-D Begley's Prof. Armitage of Miskatonic U. staged a battle of spells against the Necronomicon-toting Stockwell in *The Dunwich Horror* (1970), based on H. P. Lovecraft's story. 35-Y Fraser, as still another Ripper, was unmasked by Neville, as the World's First Consulting Detective, in *A Study in Terror* (1965).

Etc.

**'TWILIGHT ZONE'
— IN 1915!**

An alert Canadian reader, Dwight Whalen, has come upon what may be one of the earliest uses on record of the phrase "twilight zone." It appears in the *Niagara Falls (NY) Gazette* of May 6, 1915, in an article entitled:

**TO ELIMINATE THE
"TWILIGHT ZONE" IN
STATE GOVERNMENT**

**This is Work of Committee of
Constitutional Convention of
Which F. C. Tanner is the
Chairman.**

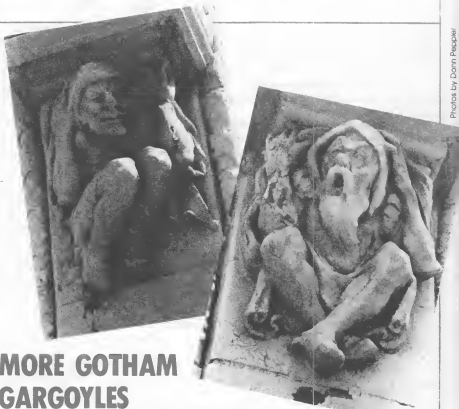
The article itself is based on an interview with Republican State Committee chairman Frederick C. Tanner, who remarks:

"To use a popular phrase, there is a 'twilight zone' between the various branches of the government where apparently no one is responsible. This may not be the cause of the 'boss system,' but it is a powerful ally to it."

Comments Dwight Whalen: "This is one twilight zone that has never been eliminated from government at any level."

**POWER
OF THE
PRESS**

Apparently someone out there's reading us . . . and heeding us. One small record company has reported a significant increase in sales of some of the modern, rather esoteric works that Jack Sullivan recommended in his recent TZ music column.

**MORE GOTHAM
GARGOYLES**

TZ reader Donn Peppler looked up one day and discovered these venerable characters clinging to the archway of a building on 57th Street and Broadway. Gothicism lives in the Big Apple.



BAD TIMING

The following item from the *New York Post* was submitted by Mark Weinfeld of Long Island City, NY:

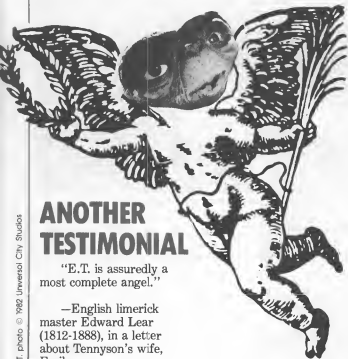
BORN IN THE TWILIGHT ZONE

SANTA FE (AP)—The Santa Fe school board says William Gilson cannot enroll in the first grade because he was born at 1:50 a.m. on Sept. 1, 1976, two hours after the cutoff.

But when William entered the world in New Brunswick, Canada, it was only 10:50 p.m. Aug. 31 in Santa Fe, so the boy should be allowed to sign up for the first grade, his father says. Bruce Gilson asked District Judge Petra Maes to order the Santa Fe schools to accept his son in the first grade on Wednesday.

In his petition, Gilson cited a letter from the state education department's assistant general counsel, Chuck Noland, saying the boy may be properly reported as a first-grader this year because he would have been eligible had he been born in New Mexico instead of a time zone further east.

The school board has declined to admit the youngster because he was born after the cutoff for entering first grade, which by state law is 12:01 a.m. Sept. 1, 1976.

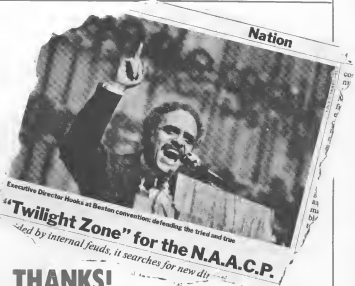


ANOTHER TESTIMONIAL

"E.T. is assuredly a most complete angel."

—English limerick master Edward Lear (1812-1888), in a letter about Tennyson's wife, Emily.

In last month's issue, the lines from "To E.T." were reprinted from *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, edited by Edward Connery Lathem. Copyright 1923, © 1969 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston. Copyright 1951 by Robert Frost. Reprinted by permission of Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Publishers.



THANKS!

So far, more than seventy-five avid readers (avid, that is, for a Maximilian poster) have sent us copies of the article above, from the July 12 *Time*. We thank you all for this gratifying response, but can only award a poster to the writer of the first letter we received: Diane K. Hutchens of East Lansing, MI. Fast work, Diane!

MAP OF THE MACABRE

Reader Joel Levitt of Danbury, CT, has been looking through his atlas and has discovered, if not the Twilight Zone, some other remarkable places. He writes:

Cunningly concealed amid the landscape of America are towns and villages with mystifying place names such as **Midnight**, Mississippi, **The Boneyard**, Arizona, **Skull**, Nebraska, and **Skeleton**, Oklahoma.

Legendary horrors abound in **Frankenstein**, Missouri, **Transylvania**, Virginia, **Giant**, South Carolina, and **Bigfoot**, Texas. There's a **Bloodsucker Lake** in Saskatchewan and a mountain pass in Colorado that locals cryptically call **The Mummy**.

One can uncover **Spies** in North Carolina, midway between Raleigh and Charlotte, detect a **Hustler** in Wisconsin, near the Fort McCoy Military Reservation, and expose a **Crook** in Colorado in the northeast corner of the state. There's even a village in Montana where everyone's a **Little Crooked**.

The mapmaker's mayhem includes **Dead Lake** in Florida and towns such as **Hanging Limb**, Tennessee, and **Cut and Shoot**, a suburb of Houston. There's murder by sharp instrument (**Bad Axe**, Michigan, **Stab**, Kentucky, and **Razor**, Texas), blunt object (**Hammer**, Minnesota, **Big Rock**, Iowa, and of course **Boulder**, Colorado), and poison (**Hemlock**, Indiana). And in North Carolina, all the transgressions in one small town are crimes of **Passion**.

Whatever the method, the mystery is easy to solve. Just look for the solution north of Baltimore, Maryland. 'Twas the Butler whodunit.

'THE EVIL DEAD'

Why you haven't seen it yet . . .
and why you ought to
by Stephen King

WHILE ON THE SCENE
AT CANNES, THE AUTHOR
STUMBLED UPON—WELL,
NOT GOLD, EXACTLY, BUT
PLENTY OF GREAT GORE.

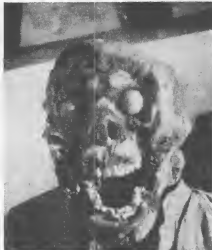
When I met Sam Raimi at the Cannes Film Festival in May of 1982, my first thought was that this fellow was one of three things: a busboy, a runaway American high school student, or a genius. He wasn't a busboy, and Raimi finished high school some time ago, although he has the sort of ageless sophomore looks that are going to keep bartenders asking to see his driver's license or state liquor card until he's at least thirty-five. That he is a genius is yet unproven; that he has made the most ferociously original horror film of 1982 seems to me beyond doubt. The only problem is that you may never see it.

Farnsworth Wright, the legendary editor of *Weird Tales* in the 1930s, admitted—with some reluctance—that he had rejected one story, *one single story*, on the grounds that it might well be too gruesome for current tastes. The tale, by William Hope Hodgson, had to do with a maniac who was killing people and turning them into soup (this same idea formed the basis for Stanley Ellin's classic debut story, "The Specialty of the House," some fifteen years later). "When it's too much," Wright said, "class doesn't matter."

This may be the case with Raimi's film *The Evil Dead*. Take a good look at the accompanying stills, dear reader, because most of the large American film distribution nets have now passed on Raimi's independently financed film. (The



In Sam Raimi's still-unreleased *The Evil Dead*, the stalwart hero, played by Bruce Campbell (left), is forced to contend with some highly ambulatory corpses (right) ...



... and discovers that solid walls offer surprisingly little protection.

latest to pass was Paramount, which distributed the hugely successful—if brainless—*Friday the 13th*; their verdict, like Wright's, was that too much was just too much.)

Raimi, a Michigan native now quartered near Detroit, was twenty when he directed and wrote *Evil Dead*. (He was also one of the cameramen, assisted in the first half by Tim Philo.) His producer, Rob Tapert, was twenty-six. The gruesome special effects were achieved in tandem by Tom Sullivan, twenty-four, and Bart Pierce, who is all of thirty. The five stars were

college kids. The film was shot in sixteen millimeter and blown up to thirty-five for theatrical release. The resulting effect is grainy but oddly apt; the film has a weirdly convincing documentary look that no one has seen since George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead*, a film Raimi admits was a strong influence.

The Evil Dead has the simple, stupid power of a good campfire story—but its simplicity is not a side effect. It is something carefully crafted by Raimi, who is anything but stupid. Five college students on

a holiday, two boys and three girls, find a deserted cabin and an ancient book—a Lovecraftian Book of the Dead—that turns them into unkillable zombies, one by one, until only the film's star, Bruce Campbell, is left. The only way to get rid of these zombies—the evil dead—is by dismemberment. Luckily a chainsaw is handy, and . . .

And it doesn't sound like much.

Well, neither does Hansel and Gretel or Bluebeard in the hands of an untalented teller. What Raimi achieves in *Evil Dead* is a black rainbow of horror. The makeup of his zombies is derivative of Dick Smith's in *The Exorcist*, his plot is derivative of Romero's *Dead* movies (even dismemberment as the antidote is derivative of these—remember the idiotic sheriff in *Night* intoning that you had to "burn 'em or shoot 'em, but they move slow . . . they're dead, they're all messed up"?), and his small troupe of actors ranges from the merely adequate (Ellen Sandweiss and Betsy Baker) to the fairly good (Bruce Campbell and, in particular, Hal Delrich, who brings the happy, beer-swilling fraternity scuzzo to gruesome life). So, what's going on here?

Mostly what's going on is Sam Raimi, who is so full of talent that somebody unable to get it together might be tempted to wonder if gobbling the man's fingernails could possibly do any good.

In *Evil Dead* the camera has the kind of nightmarish fluidity that we associate with the early John Carpenter; it dips and slides and then zooms in so fast you want to plaster your hands over your eyes. The film begins and ends with crazily exhilarating shots that make you want to leap up, cheering. (At Cannes, French cinema-freaks did exactly that.) In the first, we are skimming giddily over a swamp; in the last we come plunging madly down a wooded hill into that damned deserted cabin where all the madness, dismemberment, and lunacy occurred. This was no Steadicam, imported at five thousand dollars a day (as in *The Shining*); it was, instead, what Raimi and company ingeniously called a "Shaky-cam." He describes it in the offhand manner that a *wunderkind* might explain how he

made an atom smasher out of a couple of Campbell's soup cans for the Hicksville Science Fair.

"We couldn't afford a Steadicam," he says, "so we improvised. We mounted the camera in the middle of a two-by-four about fifteen feet long. A couple of guys grabbed it, one on either end, and they just ran like hell." In some of *Evil Dead*'s other eye-popping shots, Raimi or Philo carried the camera

—which weighed about ten pounds—strapped to one hand. Somebody ought to tell Kubrick, Spielberg, *et al* that there's really nothing to this stuff. Just bolt the camera to a two-by-four and run like hell.

The Evil Dead was basically a cottage production, much like *Night of the Living Dead*, which made its appearance in less difficult (read pre-MPAA) times. Raimi and his two partners put up what money



Made on a shoestring budget, the film features a meltdown sequence in which *Evil Dead* such as the one at top (played by Ellen Sandweiss) age two thousand years in a few seconds (above), reverting to what Raimi calls their "unborn stuff."



There's one way of destroying the Evil Dead, outright physical dismemberment, and—you guessed it—it's messy.



Here, for example, a zombie played by Betsy Baker is about to be dispatched.

they could; he and producer Rob Tapert went after the rest. Tapert and Bruce Campbell, the film's star, dropped out of Michigan State University and raised much of the film's small budget (well under a million) from private investors: lawyers, Raimi says, doctors, builders, contractors—"people like that." To attract them, they made a kind of "pre-feature" in super-eight millimeter. "We did everything," Raimi says, laughing, from his office at Renaissance Pictures in Detroit. "We were busboys, we drove cabs, all that stuff." But it wasn't just to raise dough for the production, he emphasizes; they wanted to hire a good bunch of lawyers to hammer out an airtight investment agreement. And so they seem to have done, because the investors are happy enough. *Evil Dead* may never play an American screen, but deals have been made in several foreign countries, including the lucrative Hong Kong market. The investors will probably get clear, mostly due to the care of Raimi's jury-rigged production company.

The film is now being handled by Irvin Shapiro, who may be the oldest and smartest handler of independent film productions in the free world—the real-life equivalent of Burgess Meredith in the *Rocky* films. Shapiro may now be seventy,

eighty, or a hundred and ten. No one really knows. But his career has been long and fabulous. Even in the 1930s, you could find him at the Cannes Film Festival. During that same decade, Shapiro bought a number of Picasso sketches from the artist himself, who traded them for coffee and broche. Raimi himself related an Irv Shapiro story with relish. Raimi asked him where he'd gotten his start. "With Einstein," said Shapiro—or at least that's what it sounded like. Not sure what he was talking about, and with thoughts of E=MC² filling his head, Raimi asked for clarification

—whereupon Shapiro told him about doing publicity for Sergei Eisenstein's *Potemkin*.

"I first saw Shapiro's name in *Variety*," Raimi says, "in connection with George Romero." Shapiro has, in fact, sold a number of Romero's pictures, from *Martin and Dawn of the Dead* to *Creepshow*. "I respect the man for his experience, and because he knows what the picture is worth," Sam Raimi says.

But so far, nothing is shaking in Raimi's native country, in spite of the standing ovations at Cannes. The smart Hollywood thinking is that the day of the "raw horror film" has passed. Raimi is not happy about the idea, but in the meantime he's turned his attentions to a new picture. The working title is *Relentless*. The same word might apply to Raimi himself.

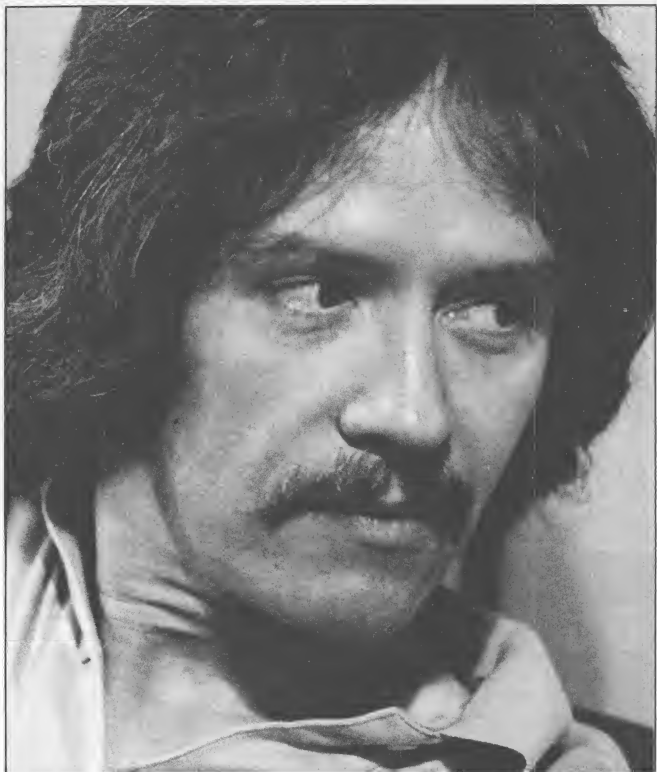
Asked what he wants out of the business, he says: "Right now I want to make enough money to get my car fixed. It's been sitting out in front of my house since we finished *Evil Dead*, and my folks are pestering me to have it taken away. I don't want to do that. I want to get it fixed." Raimi's car, it turns out, is the one driven by the hapless college students in *Evil Dead*. At one point it almost drops through a decaying bridge. The crew saved it after the crucial take, but as he turned into his home block after the film was wrapped, the engine caught on fire. It's sitting there now, in Detroit.

So's the film—waiting for an American distributor.

Any takers? **17**



Campbell consoles his dying friend, played by Hal Delrich. The low-cost grue-fest has yet to find a U.S. distributor, but should soon be turning up in Europe and Hong Kong.



JOHN CARPENTER: Doing His Own 'Thing'

WITH *FIRESTARTER* STILL AHEAD, *THE THING*'S DIRECTOR TALKS ABOUT HIS LIFELONG LOVE OF HORROR MOVIES, THE SPATE OF FILMS SPAWNED BY HIS *HALLOWEEN*, AND THE PERILS OF REMAKING—OR APPEARING TO REMAKE—A CULT CLASSIC.

Interviewer **James Verniere** reports:

There are two equally vocal schools of thought on the subject of filmmaker John Carpenter. His promoters argue that Carpenter is one of the superstars of the current crap of horror and science fiction film directors and that his films are technically brilliant, exciting, and full of unparalleled moments of horror and suspense. His detractors argue that Carpenter hasn't made a good film since *Halloween* (1978)—some say since *Assault on Precinct 13* (1976)—and that his latest work embodies all the worst aspects of genre filmmaking: stick-figure characterization and gratuitous violence that pander to audiences' basest instincts.

Whatever the truth, John Carpenter might be described as one of cinema's "children of the damned," part of that generation that grew up not on America's playing fields but in the cool, dark expanse of her movie theaters, bathed in the screen's iridescent glow. Among these "children" one could list a number of contemporary filmmakers who grew up, if not "alien," at least alienated, outsiders drawn to science fiction and horror films of the '50s and '60s, which became an integral part of their vision of the world. William Friedkin, Brian DePalma, George Lucas, Steven Spielberg, George Ramera, David Cronenberg, and John Carpenter all have a share of that alienated, anti-social sensibility, and it's reflected in the imagery one finds in their films.

Born in Bowling Green, Kentucky, the son of a university music professor, John Carpenter started his filmmaking career as a child with his father's eight-millimeter camera. He also seems to have inherited some of his father's musical talent, composing the music for *Halloween*, *The Fog*, and *Escape from New York*. Later, as a graduate student at the University of Southern California (George Lucas's alma mater), Carpenter sharpened his filmmaking skills by assisting in the editing, writing, scoring, and directing of a short called *The Resurrection of Bronco Billy*, a film which won an Academy Award in 1970. While still at USC, Carpenter, together with writer Dan O'Bannon (who went on to pen the original story for *Raiders of the Lost Ark*), made *Dark Star* (1973), a \$60,000 science fiction film parody briefly released in 1975 that has since attained cult status on the repertory circuit.

During the period between *Dark Star* and his second feature, Carpenter wrote three screenplays—*Blood River*, *Eyes*, and *Black Moon Rising*—only one of which, *Eyes*, was eventually produced as *Eyes of Laura Mars*. Car-

penter's second directorial effort, *Assault on Precinct 13*, is a slick, low-budget thriller about a group of cops and convicts trapped in an isolated police station by an avenging youth gang. The film is something of an homage to *Haward Hawks'* *Rio Brava* (Hawks is Carpenter's spiritual mentor) with urbanized villains in place of Indians. A failure in the U.S., *Assault* was a sleeper in Europe, where Carpenter was hailed as a major young filmmaker. In fact, *Assault* so impressed producer Irwin Yablans that he offered Carpenter a film called *The Baby-Sitter Murders*, a film that was ultimately titled *Halloween* (1978), a \$400,000 shocker that has since become the largest-grossing independent feature in movie history, with about \$100 million in rentals so far.

Following the phenomenal success of *Halloween*, Carpenter went on to make two critically acclaimed TV movies, *Someone Is Watching Me* and *Elvis* (with Carpenter's favorite actor, Kurt Russell, in the lead), and entered the mainstream of feature filmmaking with *The Fog* (1980) and *Escape from New York* (1981), the former about malevolent ghosts who terrorize a small California seaside community, the latter a science fiction film about a World War III vet (again Kurt Russell) who rescues the President of the U.S., who is being held hostage in Manhattan, which has become a walled-in penal colony.

Meanwhile, Carpenter's biggest hit, *Halloween*, has become something of an industry. It is re-released every year during the witching season, and it has already sired two offspring, *Halloween II* and *III*, both produced by Carpenter and the producer of the original *Halloween*, Debra Hill. His latest film is something of an offspring itself. Based

"I love Halloween. I love the idea of dressing up and wearing masks. But I don't want to direct a Halloween again."

on the John W. Campbell, Jr., story "Who Goes There?" that inspired the *Haward Hawks'* *Christian Nyby* 1951 film classic *The Thing from Another World*, John Carpenter's *The Thing* is an effect-laden paranoid fantasy about twelve men stationed in the Antarctic who battle a shape-shifting alien (compliments of special effects makeup expert Rob Bottin) able to assume the form of even the men themselves. Carpenter's next project will be a film adaptation of Stephen King's bestselling novel *Firestarter*.

TZ: Do you consider yourself part of the "children of the damned"—the generation raised on horror movies?

Carpenter: Well, I never thought of it that way, but I tend to agree with your idea. Personally, my experience with horror films was just that. I seemed totally out of place in real life, and I found some sort of life in the movies, especially science fiction and horror films and westerns. I formed a bond with escapist entertainment, and I wanted to make films myself.

TZ: Did your interest in escapism extend to the graphic arts? Were you a fan of E.C. comics?

Carpenter: Yes, definitely. I loved E.C. comics. But you see, my parents, my dad especially, felt concerned that all of this stuff was warping me very badly—movies, comic books. He wanted me to learn the violin and stuff like that. So of course it was partially because he didn't want me to do it that I did it. And E.C. comics were the real forbidden fruit. I mean they were dangerous to the mind because they were so graphic. But they were also wonderful, so inventive. As far as I'm concerned, *The Fog* is an E.C. comic. It's my tribute.

TZ: How did you turn an interest in genre films into a career in filmmaking?

Carpenter: I made my first film with an old eight-millimeter when I was eight. That's where I started. I've been doing it professionally for twelve years. I started at USC with *Dark Star*, which took four years and

cost \$60,000. And from there each thing was a step leading to Hollywood. *Dark Star* was released in 1975 as a counter-culture film, but it didn't get much exposure.

TZ: After *Dark Star*, did you hope that somebody like Roger Corman would come along and give you a break, like he did for so many other contemporary directors?

Carpenter: That notion is more legendary than true. Coppola's *Dementia 13*, for instance, was made

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because Corman was already in Ireland filming *The Young Racers*. He had three extra days with all the technicians and actors, and he wanted to make another movie. Corman offered to allow Coppola to make a film if Coppola could raise half the money. So Coppola dashed off a script and then sold the English rights for \$20,000. In other words, he acted as his own producer. I know the legend sounds nice, but it's not accurate. I heard people say, "This is the training ground." And I would

pressed outrage because all the victims in the film are sexually active, while the heroine is a virgin. Does that make you a closet puritan?

Carpenter: The killer in *Halloween* is sexually repressed. That's his problem. There's a connection between the killer and the virginal heroine. They're both repressed. I wasn't making any comment on sexually active girls.

TZ: *The Fog*, on the other hand, is an old-fashioned ghost story that seems to be about collective guilt.

TZ: Your films also contain cinematic allusions. In *Halloween* the kids are watching *Forbidden Planet* and *The Thing* on television. There is imagery that recalls *Night of the Living Dead* in *Assault on Precinct 13*. *The Fog* concludes with the admonition, "Look for the fog," which recalls the classic warning at the end of Hawks's *The Thing*: "Keep watching the skies." Your latest film, *The Thing*, shares quite a bit of imagery with the original. Are you trying for some specific effect?

Carpenter: No, not really. Mostly it's for fun or it's unconscious.

TZ: There is a theory that the images in certain classic films become part of the collective unconscious of a generation of filmgoers, and that when another film alludes to these images, it triggers certain unconscious memories.

Carpenter (smiling broadly): That sounds great. I wish I had said it.

TZ: Why make another version of a classic film like *The Thing*?

Carpenter: The original film was based on the John W. Campbell story "Who Goes There?" As a matter of fact, a lot of films have been based on that story. It's a classic of science fiction. *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* and *Alien* are in some way based on it. I felt that the story had never really been done right, so I decided to go back and try again. The original film is a classic. It influenced me as a child, and I studied it in film school because it was influenced by Howard

"A lot of fans want to know what the trick is. To me, that spoils the magic."

ask them, "Where do I go?" It was like any other studio. As soon as you have a track record, fine. Dan O'Bannon brought *Alien* to Corman, but Corman wanted to make it for \$100,000, and Dan had to get half the money.

TZ: Were you discouraged by the domestic failure of *Assault on Precinct 13*?

Carpenter: Yes. I was upset by its failure, very disappointed. It was distributed as a violent exploitation film, almost a black exploitation film, emphasizing the youth gang element. But I was ready for failure. *Dark Star* had failed. By the time *Assault* was a success in Europe, it was two years later and anticlimactic.

TZ: Then you weren't prepared for the success of *Halloween*?

Carpenter: It was a very strange experience. The first thing I heard was a bunch of bad reviews. So I thought, "Oh, here we go again." Then a few critics championed the film, and there was a demand for it. The distributor was an independent struggling against all the majors, so he could only book time in October for two weeks. That's all the theaters would give him. He got it out and hoped for word of mouth to spread. Lo and behold it did, and the theater owners asked to get it back. October and November used to be the worst time to release a film—dead time. But if you had a small film, you could get it on the screen then, because the big studios were waiting for Christmas. It was a good time to see non-mainstream films.

TZ: Some viewers of *Halloween* ex-

Carpenter: Yes, it is truly about guilt. No one seems to come up with that in discussions. But it is about the past, and the guilt we all share. I telescoped in on the figure of the priest that Hal Holbrook plays.

TZ: Your films are full of fluid, serpentine camera movement that adds to the malevolent atmosphere.

Carpenter: You can use the camera for manipulation. In *Halloween* the audience identifies with the killer because it sees things through his eyes in the opening scenes. More important than that, you can use the camera to add a three-dimensional quality to your shots. When you move the camera, you create the illusion of depth.



"... a boy's fantasy about New York City." In *Escape from New York* (1981), good-guy outlaws Harry Dean Stanton, Adrienne Barbeau, and Kurt Russell team up to rescue the kidnapped U.S. President, played by Donald Pleasence, from the prison island known as Manhattan.

Hawks, who was the producer and, some say, the director of that film. However, I still wanted to make a film that was faithful to the original story. The men in Campbell's story can't tell who's who. Who goes there? Basically, the question is, Is my best friend a monster? I don't think the original film addressed that aspect of the story.

TZ: Inevitably you will run afoul of fans who believe that the original is a classic that should not be tampered with.

Carpenter: I don't think my version is anything like the original, which was one of the first monster-from-outer-space films. It was made just after the big flying saucer scare over Mt. Rainier, which accounted for a lot of its popularity. I wouldn't try to compete with that film. It would be stupid of me to try to remake a Howard Hawks film.

TZ: Then this isn't a case of the student trying to exceed the master?

Carpenter: Oh, no.

TZ: You've gone on record as saying, "The fans think they own these films, but they don't." That's an awfully bitter remark to come from a man whose career is perhaps a product of his popularity with the fans.

Carpenter: When I said that, I was referring to special effects. There's an insistence on the part of a lot of fans that they understand exactly how you do a certain effect. They want to know what the trick is. To me, that spoils the magic. Any film is an illusion that only works in the camera lens. To reveal the trick would be to destroy the illusion. There were a couple of magazines that were dead set on coming onto our set and photographing our sequences. I said, "No way."

TZ: If you wanted to disassociate yourself from the original film, why didn't you use a different title—"Who Goes There?", for example?

Carpenter: If you want to make a monster movie, it seems to me that the greatest title of all time is *The Thing*.

TZ: Some suggest that, like many of your contemporaries, you suffer from the anxiety of influence—that you are so influenced by Hawks that you have to try to outdo him.

Carpenter: I don't think so. My study of Hawks was in the past. Certainly he influenced me technically, but I don't pretend to be able to do



"E.C. comics were the real forbidden fruit." Pulled back against the window, Jamie Lee Curtis struggles to escape the grip of a resurrected pirate in *The Fog* (1980), a ghost film Carpenter describes as a tribute to E.C. comics.

what he did—overlapping dialogue, simultaneous action. I wouldn't dare try.

TZ: Still, there is a spate of remakes, updates, and sequels today. Are young filmmakers trying to revise the myths of their childhood?

Carpenter: I hadn't thought of it that way, but it sounds good. I also think, though, that a lot of remakes are made simply because, if a film's successful, people will often go back to see another version.

TZ: Are you disturbed when people refer to *The Thing* as an effects film?

Carpenter: No. It is, in fact, full of special effects. The point was not to make a special effects film. The point was to make a monster movie. Then the question becomes, What does your monster look like? What can it do? Ninety percent of the time the monster ends up being a man in a rubber suit flopping around in the shadows.

TZ: How did you and Rob Bottin determine what your *Thing* would look like?

Carpenter: Well, we tried to imagine a look. Would it be a bug or a slug or a worm? Well, Rob suggested that we try for something completely different. He wanted to emphasize the fact that this thing could look like anything. We went on from there.

TZ: Since *Halloween*, you've been blamed for all the stalk-and-slash imitations that followed.

Carpenter: Yes, and I don't think it's fair to blame me.

TZ: How much influence did you exert over *Halloween II*?

Carpenter: That's a long, long story. That was a project I got involved in as a result of several different kinds of pressure. I had no influence over the direction of the film. I had an influence in the post-production. I saw a rough cut of *Halloween II*, and it wasn't scary. It was about as scary as a *Quincy*. So we had to do some post-production work to bring it at least up to par with the competition.

TZ: So, then, you did reshoot scenes. **Carpenter** (pauses and sighs): There was some additional shooting done,

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"I wasn't making any comment on sexually active girls." It's Jamie again, this time struggling with "the Shape" (a role played by three different actors) in Carpenter's 1978 *Halloween*.

primarily in the nature of connecting material. Plus they were under a whole lot of time pressure. But so was I with the original, so I didn't have a whole lot of sympathy for them.

TZ: You didn't choose Rick Rosenthal to direct?

Carpenter: Yes, I did. I chose him. He did a terrific short called *Toy*. It was full of suspense and tension and terrific performances. He is making another film now, so his career is on the way.

TZ: Many of those who championed *Halloween* found the sequel odious.

Carpenter: It got some bad reviews, and it was exploitative.

TZ: Will *Halloween III* be a completely new story?

Carpenter: Yes. It's directed by Tommy Wallace, who was my production designer and editor. We have a different story. Nigel Kneale, who wrote the Quatermass films, wrote the script. It's totally different. It's

"I saw a rough cut, and it wasn't scary." Jamie's character, Laurie the baby-sitter, survived into 1981's *Halloween II*, directed by Rick Rosenthal, and Donald Pleasence returned as Dr. Loomis. Carpenter supervised the post-production work.

about a small town where people are producing masks that, when triggered, will send a plague of demons upon us all on Halloween night. It's almost a science fiction movie.

TZ: So the Shape from the first two films will not make a reappearance?

Carpenter: The Shape is dead. Donald Pleasence's character is dead, too, unfortunately.

TZ: Where will it all end? Will there be a *Halloween IV*?

Carpenter: I don't know. The original film created a whole new season to show films—Halloween. And I love Halloween. I love the idea of dressing up and wearing masks. But I don't want to direct a *Halloween* again. What the films are good for is to give somebody who's never directed a chance.

TZ: Is *Escape from New York* a Midwestern boy's fantasy about New York City?

Carpenter: That's pretty much correct. It was just an excuse for a science fiction adventure film. It was influenced by Harry Harrison's *Deathworld* novels.

TZ: You were a genre film fan. Do you have any guilty pleasures in the genre? Any truly bad films you love?

Carpenter: I love *Attack of the Crab Monsters*, *Not of This Earth*, and *Earth vs. The Flying Saucers*. I see them again and again and still ex-

perience the same joy. Have you ever seen *Plan Nine from Outer Space*? It's one of the most pleasurable viewing experiences you can have. Bad films are fun. *The Bride of the Monster*. *The Beast of Yucca Flats*. Great.

TZ: Why do you want to adapt Stephen King's *Firestarter*?

Carpenter: I like that story. It's about a drug experiment conducted in the sixties that alters the glands of a couple who later have a daughter

who can start fires with her mind. The government finds out, and it becomes a chase about a little girl who is pyrokinetic and a mutant. I want to do it because it's exciting.

TZ: Will Stephen King write the screenplay?

Carpenter: The screenplay is already written. It was written by Bill Lancaster, the same fellow who wrote *The Thing* script. I've never talked to King about it.

TZ: I understand that Lancaster's original script for *The Thing* contained quite a bit of humor that was eventually excised.

Carpenter: Who do you understand that from?

TZ: I heard there was a scene with the protagonist and a blow-up doll.

"If you want to make a monster movie, it seems to me that the greatest title of all time is The Thing."



"Basically the question is, is my best friend a monster?" Man's best friend is indeed a monster in this summer's horror-adventure, *The Thing*. Here Carpenter (by camera) and effects technicians set up an early transformation sequence in which a stray husky—actually a model—proves to be a huge, shape-shifting alien.

JOHN CARPENTER



The *Thing's* alien can also take the form of humans—as this luckless doctor (Richard Dysart) is about to learn.

Why did you remove it?

Carpenter: Well, I shot that scene, and it wasn't very funny. The movie was cut from over two hours to about one hundred minutes so as not to bore an audience. That's done on every film. You shoot more.

TZ: A couple of years ago you were planning on making a film called *The Philadelphia Experiment*. What happened to that and what is it based on?

Carpenter: *The Philadelphia Experiment* is going to be made with me as executive producer and Joe Dante as director. Three years ago I was going to do it as my next film, but for the first time in my life I was unable to write a third act for a screenplay. I just couldn't figure out what to do. The film is based on an incredible true story about an experiment in invisibility that was conducted by the Americans during World War II. Using Einstein's unified field theory as a basis, scientists developed a mechanism, the idea of which was to somehow vibrate an object within a magnetic field so that, according to the theory, the object would then disappear. So they got these degaus-

sers and they put them on a ship and sailed it out into Philadelphia harbor one day in 1943. When they turned on the fields, the ship disappeared. *Boingggg*, off it went. All you could see was the outline of the hull in the water. When the ship came back, every crew member aboard was out of his mind, crazy . . . and had been somewhere else. The government immediately covered up the story. The men continued to go crazy. That's

horror/science fiction boom ends?

Carpenter: I don't think it will ever end. It may not be at the peak it is now.

TZ: What is your concept of horror? Why do you think people deliberately subject themselves to terror in the movies?

Carpenter: Horror films give people an opportunity to express or to channel feelings that society frowns upon. All of us are fascinated by the forbid-

"Ninety percent of the time the monster ends up being a man in a rubber suit flopping around in the shadows."

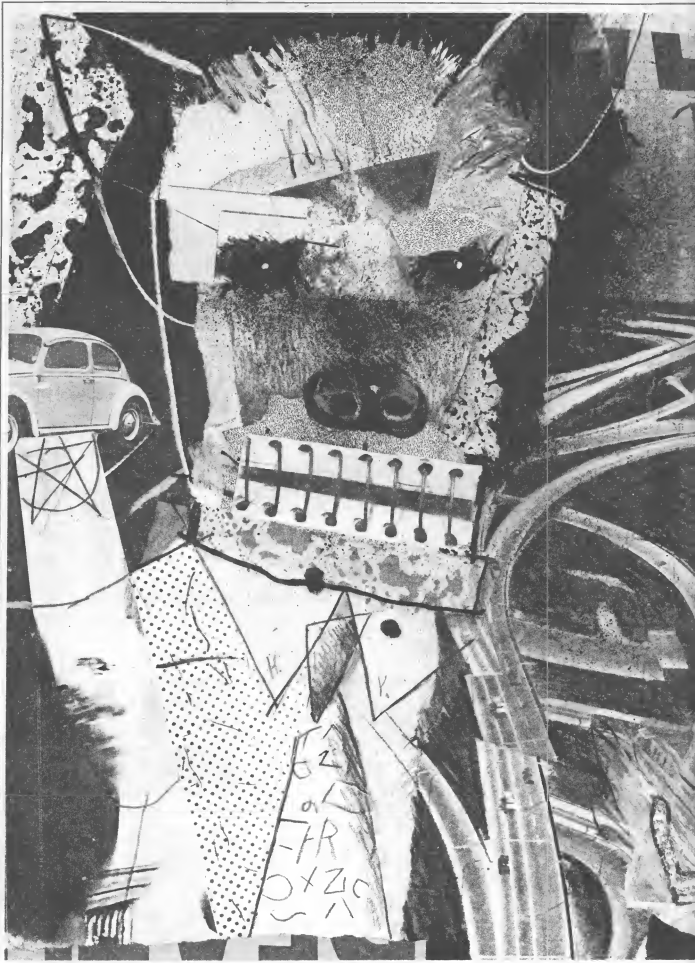
The Philadelphia Experiment.

TZ: The government did an awfully good job covering this up, since to most people this story will be news.

Carpenter: But if you look back over the years—the '40s, the '50s, and the '60s—there are newspaper articles all over the place about it.

TZ: Will you be out of a job if the

den, by the darkness, by monstrosity. But in our dealings with each other in society, we can't let those things out. We'd all be crazy. Film gives people the chance to be frightened, to be put through the wringer, to go down into that forbidden area. And, of course, the great thing about movies is that they are harmless. **17**





Hell is Murky

by John Alfred Taylor

THEY SAY IT'S NICE TO HAVE
A CULT FOLLOWING.
BUT NOT *THIS* KIND OF FOLLOWING.
AND NOT *THIS* CULT.

Jack Hollander is on the Hollywood Freeway, heading home in the afternoon rush. The traffic report drones on the radio as he edges his old Buick in front of a purple van with gold stripes as naturally as a born Angeleno. But then, most born Angelenos aren't; they just have a few months or years on him.

The only thing that worries Jack is that, after three weeks, he feels as much a part of the landscape as a Scientologist or an orange. Already he has tasted the avocado, if not the lotus. He has had his hair bleached and styled; he has even priced a white Mercedes. All that keeps him from going completely Californian is the thought of what his friends back in Phoenix would say.

So far everything they've said has been congratulatory or cheerfully envious of his luck. When Universal Infosystems decided to reorganize (i.e. rub out) their audiovisual department, Jack hadn't been too worried. He had a marketable skill; another job would turn up. But he'd never expected to get a job so quickly, especially after the lukewarm interview at Disney. Steiner had been different, asking to keep Jack's portfolio and calling him up that night to tell him he could come to work at Optitoons any time.

As he's told Margo in his first letter, the

Hell is Murky

animation industry is the easiest thing he's ever gotten into; he's never been paid more for less. "I am in Character Development and Layout, and find we do *everything* in pencil. Not only don't we ink anything, or color it—we don't even erase. And we're the only actual artists who work here. The animators are usually more mechanics than artists, and the Ink-and-Paint people downstairs paint by number, using coded character models in which the numbers coincide with premixed colors and shades. All you have to do to work in the industry is stay inside the lines."

That's still true, though Jack's beginning to feel he earns his pay when he has to draw H. Y. Ena. Even in pencil. He doesn't mind drawing Toothpick or the Croc, doesn't mind the utter predictability of their dance of appetite, with H. Y. Ena inventing one foredoomed trick after another to bypass Croc and catch the insolently innocent bird who always takes shelter in the saurian's mouth. It's just that he's beginning to hate H. Y. Ena: the glittering malevolent eye, the spastic laugh, the anthropomorphic jauntiness of his gait.

Jack isn't going to let H. Y. Ena get to him—not with that check every week. But he does wonder what sort of mind thought up H. Y. Ena and who did the first sketches.

Smog stands like a brown wall in the valley ahead as he descends. And there wasn't any all day, back where you'd expect it; damned if he'll ever understand the weather here, where there isn't supposed to be any.

A yellow VW bug is dawdling along in the right lane, so slowly that Jack decides to pass even if his exit is only half a mile ahead, but it accelerates till he barely pulls in front of it before the turnoff, and as he leaves the freeway he sees it pass by almost on his bumper in the rearview mirror.

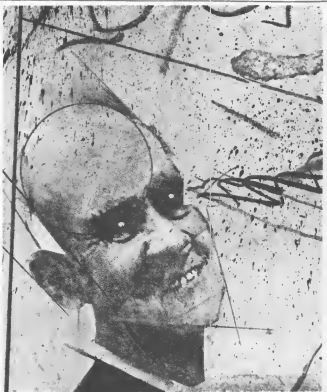
Jack stops at Mrs. Wrigley's to pick up his paper. She wears her usual housecoat and wraparound sunglasses. Mr. Wrigley was a Nebraskan who came out here to die, but Mrs. Wrigley has taken root and thrives in the sun.

"Is everything all right?" she says, concern in her voice. Jack wonders what she expects to happen to him, she's always asking how he is, if anything is wrong.

"Oh, yes, everything's fine."

"Remember, I'm always here if you need help." An offer she's made before; and Jack would think she had designs on him in spite of her age if she hadn't tried to sell him a subscription to *The Watchtower*.

When he opens the door of his apartment there's the scorched smell again, like the ghost of burnt feathers. The odor comes and goes, though the apartment was repainted just before he moved in and he's aired the place repeatedly since.



It's what they call a "single" out here, one room with separate kitchen and bath. All recently decorated, except for the fake Persian rug covering the damage to the wall-to-wall carpeting at one end of the room—something to do with the last tenants.

Jack sits down with a beer from the refrigerator to read the paper. They've found the man's other hand; parts of this man of indeterminate age and a girl in her twenties have been turning up behind local bars ever since Jack arrived. Every day on his way to work Jack passes the bar where a retiree hunting scraps for his dog found the first parcel: the girl's left leg and head and the man's right hand, neatly wrapped in a plastic garbage bag. Welcome to Greater Los Angeles.

What would H. Y. Ena say to that? Morbid? Negative thinking? Vitamin deficiency? Needs more sun? More orange juice? Rolfing? A hot tub? A course in yoga? No, that's not what H. Y. Ena would say. He'd want to know where he could find the next packet of carrion.

Jack laughs, catching himself laughing alone, then forgets it as he picks up his sketch pad and doodles a picture of H. Y. Ena in a disco suit gleefully opening a package with a foot sticking out. He draws another: HYE with butcher's saw. Then HYE dressing for surgery. HYE eyeing the haunches of a girl in a bikini. HYE as backyard chef. And all with that expression of gluttonous joy HYE always wears when expecting the immediate capture of Toothpick.

When he finishes the beer, he opens another and goes back to his sketching. HYE loose in the morgue, HYE attacking mounted dinosaur bones in a museum, page after page of baroque variations on hunger. The subject is too much for Jack; he stops and thaws out two minute-steaks, wishing they were sirloin, and fries them with onions. He eats them by the light of the setting sun.

Jack rinses the dishes, whistling his own

He almost expects a human hand, but all the plastic sheet contains is a notebook, and when he opens it, the writing makes no sense, with strange letters in green ink, except for an occasional word or phrase (if that's what it is) emphasized in red. Some kind of code or cipher.

jazzed-up version of "Danse Macabre," and debates taking out the trash. Part of his internal debate concerns the fact that on the way home he has resolved to finally unpack the last box in the closet, and if he takes the trash out, he might as well go through with it; he's been putting it off too long, just like he's been putting off answering Margo's letter.

Very soon Jack remembers why this box isn't unpacked; it's the stuff he'd rather forget but couldn't quite throw away. The bedside astrology book from Cathy, the painting of an utterly adorable nymphet with button eyes that Sherri gave him. (Possibly HYE would find the nymphet toothsome.) Funny Margo never gave him anything; the only girl you care for doesn't give you keepsakes, junk or otherwise. Jack ends up putting everything back and pushing the box to the rear of the closet again. But in the process discovers something he has never noticed before—a gray metal case the size of a shoe box.

When he drags it out, he finds it padlocked. Take it to Mrs. Wrigley? Maybe, if there's anything important inside.

The padlock and hasp are too strong for the tools he has, but not the hinge; using the shaft of his biggest screwdriver as a lever, he breaks it open. Inside is a package wrapped in plastic.

He almost expects a human hand, but all the plastic sheet contains is a spiral-bound stenographer's notebook, and when he opens it, the writing makes no sense, with strange letters in green ink, except for an occasional word or phrase (if that's what it is) emphasized in red. Some kind of code or cipher.

Nothing he can make heads or tails of, but there's a rust-colored decal on the cover—a design like a swastika, only much more graceful and kinetic, with only three curved arms. He remembers this design from somewhere. A coat of arms?

He's seen it more recently, though, on a yellow background. The design's got a funny name, but

Jack can't remember it. Anyway, no point telling Mrs. Wrigley. He leaves the box on the table when he goes to bed.

He wakes to a commercial, the announcer's voice half-drowned in a surf of static. Snapping the clock-radio off, Jack tries to remember his dream. Nasty; it had HYE in it. And something about the box.

It must have belonged to the last tenants: a couple named Malone, according to Mrs. Wrigley. They skipped out, didn't she say?

On the way to work he sees the design again, on the side of a yellow van. He's seen vans like it since he arrived, but never noticed them consciously before. *Sol Invictis Ltd.* it says in neat rust-colored lettering.

When asked about the name, Jack's stallmate Morgan Griffiths doesn't even look up from his light board. "It's a local company. They make suntan lotion."

"Is the guy really named Sol Invictis?"

"Sure. Why not?"

"Because it means 'the unconquered sun' in Latin. Something to do with the Roman Saturnalia, their celebration of the winter solstice."

"Really? I thought it was his name."

"Truth," Jack said. "I majored in archaeology and art history."

During his lunch hour he looks Sol Invictis Ltd. up in the phone book. There it is in print, and judging from the address, the main plant is only a few miles from where Jack lives.

When he drives home the smog is waiting for him, worse than yesterday. The radio says wait for "the Santa Ana" and reminds Jack that it's illegal to throw matches or cigarette butts from cars.

On the way to his exit he passes the yellow VW bug again. The hunchbacked man in it must live around here.

The scorched smell is strong in his apartment, perhaps due to the smog; he turns the air conditioner up and opens a beer.

The box with the wrecked hinge is on the table, and he takes the notebook beside it over to the couch and looks at the indecipherable script. Only a few of the neat red and green letters look like the regular alphabet; it isn't Russian or Greek. Except for the absence of lettering, the decal is exactly the same as the Sol Invictis trademark, even the same rust red. Just coincidence, or does it mean something?

He remembers the word for three-armed swirling shapes like these. *Triskelion*—something like that. *Triskelion*, *triskele*, yes, that's it.

Jack stares at the decal until it seems to take root in his eye. When he looks away the afterimage turns in front of the off-white wall.



He watches the morning news while he eats breakfast. A brushfire up Laurel Canyon, but there's no sign of it when he drives to work, just more smog.

In the art shop people are jumpy in spite of the air conditioning. Down in the maze of Ink and Paint the straw bosses are walking back and forth like caged panthers, and just before lunch Stan Fuller comes in and tells Jack to take it easy, he's working on layout for Optotoons, not Goya's black paintings.

Jack almost snaps back at him, but is glad he didn't when he looks at the layouts Stan has returned: instead of his usual lovable but fangy grin, Croc's smile looks like he has spent millennia simmering in the cauldrons of hell. Toothpick looks both cretinous and hypocritical. And this H. Y. Ena is the beast who follows people cursed by witch doctors through the bush at night.

"Did I do those? Must be the weather."

Morgan looks at them after Stan leaves. "Weather hell, it's innate depravity. You're as bad as Hal Schaeffer."

"Who?"

"The guy who invented H. Y. Ena. We had to cute the furry bastard up a lot from Hal's sketches."

"I never heard of him."

"Schaeffer's dead," Morgan mutters.

Still puzzled, Jack takes the offending sheets home to examine at his leisure. Peering at the drawings spread out on his kitchen table, Jack sees why Stan made that remark about Goya's black paintings; he can hardly believe they're his own work.

The scorched smell is worse. It must be the smog. Jack goes outside and looks at the Hollywood hills to the south. He can see more than one fire on the skyline, and a dense fog of smoke. So this is autumn in the Earthly Paradise.

But it is the Earthly Paradise, or a reasonable facsimile thereof. It's just that it's the fifth day of smog, and he's waiting for the Santa Ana to blow it all away. Though from what he's heard about the Santa Ana winds, the cure is worse than the disease,

especially with it so dry and the sagebrush on the hills just waiting for a spark.

It's as if he's seeing by heat, not light, everything's so dim and red. Above him, the clouds—if they are clouds and not a rock ceiling—glow with reflected fire. The scorched smell is everywhere, and it comes in waves like the laughter. Jack knows that laughter. H. Y. Ena comes slouching through the darkness. Or is Jack going towards him? It's hard to tell.

H. Y. Ena sees him, jerks his head to the left: "C'mon!"

He leads Jack through the red pulsing, under the stiff clouds.

They go on for what seems seconds, or hours, before H. Y. Ena stoops and cruches over a denser shadow. The creature waits till Jack gets down on all fours beside him. The mass is wrapped in plastic garbage bags. A pallid fist, half open, juts from the bundle. H. Y. Ena begins tearing at the plastic with his claws and muzzle—

Jack wakes squatting in the dark, his fingertips sore, wondering where he is. There's just enough light coming around the blind for him to recognize the room around him. He gets up and slides over to the light switch.

That's what he was scrambling at: the fake Persian rug is turned up at one side, and Jack can see the brown mark burned into the ivory carpet underneath. It looks like a letter or symbol of some sort—like Hebrew or Arabic.

Jack rolls the side of the rug up: a curve, an angle meeting it, another sigil. He pulls the whole rug away.

Jesus! It's a magic circle, just like in the old pictures. There's a pentagram and symbols in the angles and around the circumference. Just what were those last tenants into?

The scorch marks are very narrow, almost as if they were incised, not burned. Jack can't figure how they did it.

He'll have to ask Mrs. Wrigley about the Malones. Not too directly though, considering she

never mentioned what was under the Persian rug.

It's almost Saturday noon when Jack finally goes out to his car. Even though he had surprisingly little trouble getting back to sleep, he feels stretched like an old rubber band. The Buick is covered with a fine coating of ash, and Jack thinks of Pompeii. Smoke sits on the hills to the south like a lid.

Jack had been thinking of driving up the Coastal Highway to look at a few beaches—while it's too cold for sunning, he could always walk and look at the surf and what the surf brought in—yet now he lacks the energy. Or the desire, which is the same thing. Even the trip to the supermarket seems too much, but the refrigerator is almost empty.

Jack drives out Sherman Way. Not so respectable here as further west, it has metal siding and chain-link fence dealers mixed in with the boutiques and gourmet shops. At the supermarket he spends most of his time at the vegetable bins, still not used to the marvelous freshness and variety. He goes on to the neighboring liquor store, hoping to find a very special Pinot Chardonnay that Morgan Griffiths has talked up. But he is disappointed, and goes on to the next liquor store.

Still no luck, so Jack drives down to Sherman Oaks, to the store he knows will have it. On the way he goes by the bar behind which the first package of body parts was found. Never going to stop there for a drink.

On the way back the yellow VW passes him on the freeway. The twisted man inside waves, but Jack doesn't recognize him.

The wine was worth the trip, Jack decides at his late lunch. He should answer Margo's last letter, but he still feels languid. *Mañana*. He pours himself a third glass; he must remember to tell Morgan he thinks the wine is special, too.

He gets out Margo's letter to reread. At least he can think about what he's going to say...

When Jack wakes in the chair his leg is asleep and it's almost dark outside. So much for Saturday. He makes himself a big salad and finishes the wine for supper.

He feels restless. Even with the smog, the night buzzes with electricity; he can hear cars in the distance and a snatch of music from the ballroom a block away, but all he does is drive to the nearest drugstore to pick up a copy of tomorrow's paper. Always before, wherever he lived, he has arranged to get the Sunday *New York Times*; the *Los Angeles Times* just doesn't satisfy him, for all its bloatedness—he can go through it in less than an hour. But it's worth studying for what it can show him about the area; the ads often reveal more than the news stories.

The Home section is always interesting for its

demonstrations of how to live casually on half a million, and the religious ads continue to amuse and bemuse. But tonight Jack turns the page and gasps; there is the triskelion again, the same as on the metal box and the Sol Invictus vans. *Congregation of Mithras*, says the ad. It could be just a coincidence; the design was a traditional motif in Celtic art, wasn't it? But wasn't Sol Invictus a Mithraic phrase? Have to look it up.

Jack brings out the box and compares the ad with the decal. Identical, all right. He tears out the ad to save. Tomorrow he can check on the address. Then, still restless, he decides to try the phone number in the ad, even if it is Saturday night. No loss if they don't answer.

Three rings and then the sound of a gong coming from an infinity away, from further than the acoustical inadequacies of the telephone can explain. Then a voice hard to place sexually, not so much epicene as inhumanly pure: "Seeker, this is the Congregation of Mithras. We are sorry no one can speak to you now. If you wish to leave a message, wait for the tone and then give your name and your message—"

Instantly Jack slams down the receiver. Why is he breathing so fast? What is he afraid of? Then he realizes there wasn't the usual noise and hiss of a tape starting up. That was no answering machine at the other end. But was it a person?

Jack shrinks in on himself, makes himself as small as possible: something sudden and huge is passing over, he can feel the heavy cloud of its attention. He tries to make his mind a blank because it can hear what he thinks.

"The Malones?" says Mrs. Wrigley. "Oh, they skipped out one night without paying their rent. Left most of their things, at least, so I made some back. But not what they owed."

And left the box with the notebook, too, thinks Jack—but that Mrs. Wrigley can do without. He walks back to his apartment with the feeling something's gone by him, something important, but what he's missed he doesn't know.

He picks up the phone on the third ring. "Hello?"

There is silence for a long second, then a click. Somebody's gotten the wrong number.

An hour later the same thing happens. Jack hangs up, looking out at the Sunday afternoon sunshine, then winces. He knows what's coming. An instant later he feels the same pressure as last night. Something enormous is looking for him, a scrutiny sweeping overhead like the beam from a lighthouse. Again he blanks his mind. But when he senses it's safe again, he has a direction: it has come from somewhere to the south.

Jack has been thinking of checking out the ad-

Hell is Murky

dress of the Congregation of Mithras. Now he wonders if that's safe; won't he be going right toward the source? If it is the source. But it must be: all his troubles came after he tried their number and got that thing that wasn't an answering machine. But if he stays put he's pinned down, easier to find.

Finally Jack decides to stay put, though it's hard on his nerves. No point driving around to no purpose. A rhyme he learned in his youth sums it up sardonically:

*When in danger,
When in doubt,
Run in circles,
Scream and shout.*

At least there's beer in the refrigerator, and long distance on the phone; nobody can call him if he's talking to Margo, and the sound of a friendly voice would be more than welcome now.

He dials Margo's number in Phoenix, but when the phone is picked up in the middle of the first ring, the voice that answers is inhumanly pure and sweet. Jack slams down the phone, shaking.

Outside the afternoon dwindles, the sky turns blue-black.

Jack isn't quite asleep when the phone rings. For a moment he considers the danger of answering, then picks it up.

It's Margo! "Where've you been?"

"Jesus, it's good to hear you..."

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing, Marg. Nothing at all. Just feeling blue and lonely. Sorry I haven't answered your letter. Been meaning to for a week."

"That's why I'm calling. Where've you been for the last two hours?"

"Right here. Why?"

"Been using the phone?"

"No."

"You haven't?"

"Not at all. What's this about?"

"Listen—" Margo's voice is tight. "I got to worrying about you, wanted to talk. So I tried to call you—and the phone was busy."

"I haven't used it. The last time somebody called was around one—and they hung up as soon as I answered." He's not going to tell Margo what else happened, there's no way he can tell her.

"Okay, I believe you. But then I called and the phone rang and rang. Ten minutes later I called and the phone was busy again. Then two minutes later you didn't answer. Then I got a pizza parlor. So finally I checked with information. They said I had the right number. I had them dial it for me. And got the pizza parlor. The next time a recording told me to please dial one first. So I was careful to do it, and still got the recording. Then you were busy. Then a minute later nobody answered. I was dialing very

carefully by now—"

"I was here all the time, Marg."

"Funny ... But I've got you now." She laughs with relief. "You know, I almost thought somebody was trying to stop me."

"What do you mean?"

Jack grips the phone so hard it hurts.

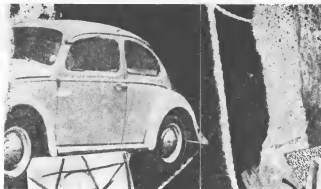
"Oh, I don't know ... Jack? Are you all right?"

"I'm fine, honey," Jack says. "Just fine."

Jack is trying very hard to keep Croc his lovable scaly self while he listens to Morgan. "So what do you have to do with the Congregation of Mithras?"

"Nothing," says Jack. "But somebody I know is mixed up with them."

"Then keep away from him," says Morgan, and Jack looks up in the cadaverous glow from his light board to see if he's serious. Morgan's expression leaves no doubt.



"Keep away? Why?"

"They're bad news."

"How come?"

"Things happen to people."

"Mob connections?"

"Nothing that makes that much sense."

"You mean like black magic, witchcraft, that sort of thing?"

"Don't mean anything," growls Morgan. "Jesus, will you look at that!" and he bends irritably over his drawing.

"How do you know?" asks Jack. "Rumors, gossip?"

"Hal Schaeffer joined."

"The guy who invented H. Y. Ena?"

"That came right after he joined."

"Any connection?"

"How should I know?" Morgan grunts.

"How did he die?"

"Wreck on the freeway. Burned to a crisp in his little yellow VW."

This time there's more light, but the sky above is still a ceiling, the clouds stiff, frozen in space. The landscape is featureless, an infinite gray plain. The

Jack wonders if perhaps the Malones didn't skip out. Could they have been kidnapped? And be appearing now as selected short objects in plastic wrap?

only shape on it is a faraway figure signaling Jack on.

Jack walks toward it, covering the distance with surprising quickness. It's H. Y. Ena, shuffling his feet impatiently. "Hurry up. They won't stay fresh much longer."

Jack follows him across the gray emptiness. On the far edge is a speck which slowly grows until Jack recognizes a yellow car. There's something about that yellow car—Jack tries to remember. Something unpleasant. It doesn't matter, though.

Somebody waves from the car, but when they come up to it there's nobody in it, just a jumble of freezer packages. H. Y. Ena opens the door, takes one out, rips it open with his teeth and paws. There's a hand inside. Its nails are painted red. As Jack watches, its finger crooks beckoningly. H. Y. Ena pulls out another package, hands it to him.

Jack unwraps it to find the head of a bearded man. Its eyes open and it smiles.

Jack is sitting up in bed, shuddering. The digital clock says it's four-twelve. He barely gets back to sleep before the radio comes on. Another morning in the Earthly Paradise. Outside the blue of the sky is slightly off.

On the way home Jack stops at the library and reads up on Mithraism; if his memory is correct and what Morgan implied is true, the Congregation of Mithras isn't much like the original. Sure enough. Mithraism was a rather decent mystery cult. It had been especially popular in the Roman armies. Certainly nothing sinister.

On a whim Jack goes to the card file, looks up *Hyenas*. They actually have a book on the beasts. Jack checks it out for two weeks.

He stays up half the night reading about H. Y. Ena's real relatives. Not exactly lovable animals, but certainly not the obscene slinkers of popular belief. A carnivore right out of the Miocene, with huge conical teeth and jaws that can crush bone. And the spotted hyena isn't always the scavenger that follows the lion; sometimes, it seems, it's the other way around, with the lion eating what the other's killed. The hyena was also supposed to be hermaphroditic. But not lovable: in the illustrations the hyena's face is frightening, not like H. Y. Ena's loony mask.

Just after midnight the phone rings. Jack doesn't answer, counting. Eleven rings before the caller gives up. Jack waits shakily, but senses no

presence searching for him overhead.

Jack visits his landlady before he goes to work. "I was talking to somebody about a couple he knew around here, and I wondered if it was the Malones."

"Something bad?" asks Mrs. Wrigley.

"No, not at all." Jack grins. "He said a bearded man. And she was younger, in her twenties."

"That was them," says Mrs. Wrigley, a sibyl in sunglasses. And Jack wonders, still half inside the dream, if perhaps the Malones *didn't* skip out. Could they have been kidnapped?—and be appearing now as selected short objects in plastic wrap?

Though why should the Malones be *cut up* so thoroughly? Maybe because things were done to them before they died. But why?

The notebook, he supposes.

You could skip out on Mrs. Wrigley, but not on the Congregation of Mithras.

The dream has left him hypersensitive, and all the way down the freeway he watches for the yellow VW bug, but to his relief never sees it. He pulls into the parking lot of the art shop with a feeling of safety—and then notices a yellow van at the end of the row. *Sol Invictus Ltd.* Not funny anymore; he grits his teeth as he goes by.

At noon the van is still there.

On a hunch he goes back to the pay phone in the hall next to the vending machines, discovers the phone book is surprisingly intact. He's not sure he remembers the address of the Congregation of Mithras correctly, so he looks it up, then looks up *Sol Invictus Ltd.* Not the same. But wait, right below it is the listing for *Sol Invictus* himself. (Whose real name is probably Billy Joe Something.) And it is the same address as the Congregation.

He walks past the van without looking and drives out, watching for it in the rearview mirror, but it doesn't follow him on the way to lunch. That's *some* relief.

Now what? How does he get these people off his back?

The yellow van is still parked in the lot when he returns, and it's hard to concentrate on his drawing. But he can draw H. Y. Ena in his sleep. Not a nice thought, considering that, in a way, it's what he's been doing these last few nights.

Going home that afternoon, Jack watches in the rearview mirror again. Again the van does not follow. But as he drives up his street, he sees another yellow van parked down the block.

Jack sits doodling in front of his tv, the picture on but the sound off. He always doodles when he has a problem; it helps him collect his thoughts, and often he doodles out a solution.

H. Y. Ena grins up at him as he takes a sip of beer. He puts down the can on the chair arm and draws a speech balloon next to the grin. *Quid pro*

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quo, he pencils into the balloon, then puts a large question mark after it. He traces the question mark over until it grows thick and black.

Quid pro quo? He sips his beer.

Dummy! What about the box? The notebook's in code, and nobody writes in code unless they want to keep a secret. And from the decal on the box, it has to do with that damn cult.

Next morning he calls in sick and has a leisurely breakfast while waiting till he's reasonably sure he won't be answered by somebody or something impersonating an answering machine.

Just the same, he's relieved to hear a woman's voice on the other end. "Congregation of Mithras."

"This is Jack Hollander. I'd like to talk to Sol Invictis."

"Mr. Invictis is not available, Mr.—What did you say your name was?"

"Hollander, Jack Hollander. And I've got something Mr. Invictis wants."

"I'm afraid I don't understand, Mr. Hollander."

"A box left behind by the former occupants of my apartment—people named Malone. They seem to have belonged to your organization. The box contained a notebook in code."

"Just a minute, Mr. Hollander. Will you please hold for a few seconds?"

He's getting somewhere. Though the hold is more than a few seconds.

The next voice is male. "You say you have something of ours?"

"Mr. Invictis?"

"The Invictis is in conference."

"I'll talk to him."

"Surely you can discuss it with me. I'm Alan Guterman, Hierarch of the Congregation—"

"I'll talk to Invictis."

"There's no need for this."

"I think it's a very interesting notebook. Maybe the newspapers would think so, too."

"I see. Will you hold, please?"

"For a while."

This time the wait is longer. Finally a deeper voice speaks. "This is Sol Invictis. You wanted to talk to me about a notebook?"

"Left in a closet by the Malones."

"What makes you think this notebook is related to the Congregation?"

"Because there's a decal of your congregation's emblem on the box. Because the notebook's in code, in red and green ink. And because you're talking to me about it."

"You're correct. We'll be glad to have it back. We had no idea where it was, after the Malones passed over. Someone can come for the notebook whenever it's convenient."

"It won't ever be convenient."

"I'm afraid I don't understand."

"I want something in return."

"A reward? Of course. You deserve something for your trouble."

"No reward. I just want you people to leave me alone."

"Leave you alone?"

"Call your troops off."

"I don't know what you mean, Mr. Hollander." "You know what I mean. Tell your people they can stop spying on me. And the rest."

"I really think you must come to the Mithraeum here so we can discuss this. It's the only way we can clear up this misunderstanding."

"All right," Jack says, wondering if this is a good idea.

The smog has finally broken, blown away by the Santa Ana. If this is what the Santa Ana does, as far as Jack's concerned it can blow all the time.

According to Invictis, his estate is on one of the canyons off Laurel, north of Mulholland. Judging from the map, the best thing to do is go out the Ventura Freeway.

No yellow VW again. Must have been the smog. Breathe enough of that, you start seeing things.

Jack sure hopes this is the solution. And he's taken extra insurance: gone to the post office with a half pound of dimes for the xerox machine and mailed the copy of the notebook off to Margo. He just hopes she won't think he's drunk or crazy when she reads his note. Though maybe it is all in his head, and only happening because he isn't fully acclimated. Once he learns to breathe smog...

When he starts down Laurel he sees smoke in the distance. He'd forgotten about the fires. And now, with the Santa Ana—

Jack passes fire trucks and emergency vehicles parked off the freeway, but most of the crews are gone. Up in the hills, he guesses. What he can see of the slopes looks peaceful enough, nothing out of the ordinary, although bits of ash are floating down to the road. He's watching the signs. If he remembers the map correctly, only two more to go, a right turn, and Invictis's estate is only a few hundred yards up the canyon.

But when he reaches the turnoff, there's a highway patrol car and a patrolman standing on the pavement. Jack puts on his turn signal, and the patrolman flags him down. "This road's closed to traffic. The fires are too close."

"Officer, I've got to—My sister and her husband live up there. They say they need me."

"Okay, you can go on. But be careful, the whole south slope's going."

"Right. Thank you, officer."

Jack goes on into the dark hall. It opens out; at the other end of the shadow space is a single flame, and beside it a man sitting alone. Invictis has a sense of style.

The south slope doesn't look too bad right now, only smoke up behind the ridge. Though the big house up there looks deserted.

Above comes a fluttering sound, and a fire-fighting helicopter rattles overhead to dump its chemicals behind the hill. A truck has parked on the shoulder, and men are scrambling out with shovels. One stares at Jack for an instant as he goes by.

Reassuringly, Invictis's place is on the north side of the canyon, the mouth of the road veiled by shrubs and evergreens, marked only by an impressive monolith of gray granite with the triskele on it in bronze.

Two more helicopters pass overhead.

Here goes, Jack tells himself. Even if he's walking in where angels fear to tread, he's not going to walk in carrying the box. That's locked in the Buick's trunk; not much security, but better than none.

Halfway up the slope the road bends through another planting that conceals a guardhouse built into the hillside. Jack stops at the barrier across the road. The guard who comes out is dressed in an ordinary rent-a-cop uniform, rather than the white robe Jack was half expecting.

"I'm Jack Hollander. I have an appointment with Mr. Invictis."

"Yessir." The guard raises the barrier. "Go right ahead."

Until he's almost at the top, Jack sees nothing but trees. The drive leads into a small parking lot they hide from below, with more trees blocking off the summit above. For a moment Jack doesn't notice the motionless figure in the shadows, and then the man waves. Jack parks and climbs to meet him. There are spiral designs in mosaic on the steps. The man is dark, slim, wears an expensively cut gray suit.

"I'm Alan Guterman, Mr. Hollander. You talked to me on the phone."

"Oh, yes, you're the, uh—Hierarch."

Guterman smiles. "Congratulations. So few get it right the first time."

"Easy," Jack says. "The real problem was remembering not to say 'heresiarch.'" Jack can't figure out whether Guterman's offended or doesn't know the word.

As they continue up, Jack begins to see buildings here and there—or is it just one building sprawling out over the hilltop, integrated into the landscape till it's half concealed? It's the kind of California Modern that looks Mayan or Egyptian. Money, money, money. The Congregation of Mithras isn't just any California cult.

At the top of the steps is a court among the trees, and at the other end bulks what must be the main entrance on cult occasions, lintel and uprights massive as a dolmen and looking much like a modern attempt at one.

Guterman stops and waves Jack inside. "The Invictis is waiting for you."

"Aren't you coming?"

"The Invictis feels you would prefer to talk to him alone."

"It doesn't matter to me."

"He thinks it best."

"Well, all right." Jack goes on into the dark hall. It opens out; at the other end of the shadow space is a single flame, and beside it a man sitting alone. Invictis has a sense of style.

He stands as Jack approaches. "Thank you for coming."

"You made it sound like I'd better."

Invictis raises his eyebrow. He's tall and lean, with a shaven head, wearing a green suit and high-necked shirt patterned in green and gold. He has pale blue eyes with the whites showing all round the pupil. "And you make it sound as if you were coerced."

"Look, I came here so you could take off your watchers—all of them."

"My watchers, Mr. Hollander?"

"You know what I mean."

Invictis has a rather nasty smile. "I assure you I don't. You might as well say I'm having you watched by this." He turns to a form in the shadows behind him, adjusting the lamp on the tripod at his side. The flame shoots up, revealing a huge image that Jack recognizes from his quick study of Mithraism: a lion-headed figure with a snake coiled round it. At least here Invictis is authentic. A great stage property.

"I didn't come here to argue, I came to make a deal."

"We'd greatly appreciate your returning the notebook."

"Will you appreciate it sufficiently?"

"Meaning exactly what, Mr. Hollander?"

"Meaning enough so I'm not bothered anymore."

"I assure you we've not, ah, bothered you in any way. But we will appreciate it sufficiently." The frozen-faced bastard won't admit a thing, even when he's promising to stop it.

"So okay."

"Where is the notebook?"

A clump of laurels
halfway up the slope
explodes into flame,
autumnal red sumac catches,
the fire licks toward him
on a blur.

"I left it in my car. I'll go down and get it."
"Thank you."

As he brings the box back up the steps, Jack thinks how easy this is, and how easy it would have been for them just to break the trunk lock if they'd known where it was. Or threaten him with violence, since he drove up alone. So Invictis means to keep his bargain, even if he won't admit there's anything to bargain about.

He's waiting in the doorway. Jack opens the box and hands him the spiral notebook. Invictis opens it, flips the pages. "We're very pleased to get this back."

"Just so you show your appreciation."

"I promise you, Mr. Hollander."

"By the way, I've taken out a little insurance."

"Oh?"

"I xeroxed the notebook and sent a copy to a friend in case anything happens to me."

"An unnecessary precaution. But understandable," Invictis smiles. "Still, one wonders what your friend will make of it."

"Then we're square?"

"Quite. Drive carefully on the way home." For a second Jack feels disoriented, as if he's being watched by someone in the dark hall, but all he can see past Invictis's shoulder is the lion-headed image. Now if it were hyena-headed—

"What about you up here?"

"The fire will never reach here." Invictis speaks with assurance, as if this is fact rather than assertion.

But Jack's not so sure when he drives out from under the trees and has a clear view of the other side of the canyon. Fire is leaping across the bushes at the top, and a helicopter stoops almost into the column of smoke and flame to drop its chemicals with no visible effect.

"You be careful," says the guard.

"You too."

"Mr. Invictis says it's safe."

At the bottom Jack races down the canyon, keeping one eye on the slope to his left. A furnace wind sucks the air out of the car window, and the roar of the fire is deafening. A clump of laurels halfway up the slope explodes into flame, autumnal red sumac catches, the fire licks toward him in a blur. The flames are going straight up in a transparent whirl; it's a goddamn firestorm! A shower of sparks and burning twigs falls onto the road and lands on his hood.

And then Jack is through and the sparks blow off the hood, leaving it barely scorched.

The patrolman at the mouth of the canyon gives him a mock salute of relief and waves him by.

Jack heads north toward Ventura, having done what he set out to do. Invictis has his notebook, and knows there's a Xerox. He'll keep his promise, won't he? Invictis is no fool. Though explaining this to Margo will be quite a job. The smog is gone, and he's safe, even if the Santa Ana's blowing and ashes will be all over his car again next morning. No more jittering in the middle of the night, no more wincing at the ringing of the phone.

North Hollywood here I come, right back where I started from.

It's still the lunchtime rush hour when he reaches the freeway, but Jack doesn't mind at all, merging and shifting unconcernedly.

Then he sees yellow in the rearview mirror, and remembers Invictis's pale blue eyes, his equivocal smile. The yellow bug is creeping up to pass.

It pulls alongside, and Jack stares as the driver turns and waves.

H. Y. Ena, his monstrous jaw open in a yellow grin.

During rush hour on the freeway, one never changes lanes without looking. The driver of the semi in the right lane has no chance to brake, and Jack sees nothing, has no time to scream, feels only the last shattering impact.

His gas tank explodes, and the yellow bug skitters away under the rising fireball, under the brassy sky. 17



LEVITATION

by Joseph Payne Brennan

A CLASSIC TALE IN WHICH WE LEARN THAT THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD HAS ITS OWN MERCILESS VERSION OF MURPHY'S LAW.

Morgan's Wonder Carnival moved into Riverville for an overnight stand, setting up its tents in the big ball park on the edge of the village. It was a warm evening in early October and by seven o'clock a sizable crowd had made its way to the scene of raucous amusement.

The traveling show was neither large nor particularly impressive of its type, but its appearance was eagerly welcomed in Riverville, an isolated mountain community many miles from the motion picture houses, vaudeville theatres and sports arenas situated in larger towns.

The natives of Riverville did not demand sophisticated entertainment; consequently the inevitable Fat Lady, the Tattooed Man and the Monkey Boy kept them chattering animatedly for many minutes at a time. They crammed peanuts and buttered popcorn into their mouths, drank cup after cup of pink lemonade, and got their fingers all but stuck together trying to scrape the paper wrappers off colored taffy candies.

Everyone appeared to be in a relaxed and tolerant state of mind when the barker for the Hypnotist began his spiel. The barker, a short stocky man wearing a checkered suit, bellowed through an improvised megaphone, while the Hypnotist himself remained aloof at the rear of the plank platform erected in front of his tent. He appeared disinterested, scornful, and he scarcely deigned to glance at the gathering crowd.

At length, however, when some fifty souls had assembled in front of the platform, he stepped forward into the light. A murmur went up from the crowd.

In the harsh overhead electric glare, the Hypnotist made a striking appearance. His tall figure, thin to the point of emaciation, his pale complexion, and most of all his dark, sunken eyes, enormous and brilliant, compelled immediate attention. His dress, a severe black suit and an archaic black string tie,

added a final Mephistophelean touch.

He surveyed the crowd coolly, with an expression betraying resignation and a kind of quiet contempt.

His sonorous voice reached to the far edge of the throng. "I will require one volunteer from among you," he said. "If someone will kindly step up—"

Everyone glanced around, or nudged his neighbor, but nobody advanced toward the platform.

The Hypnotist shrugged. "There can be no demonstration," he said in a weary voice, "unless one of you is kind enough to come up. I assure you, ladies and gentlemen, the demonstration is quite harmless, quite without danger."

He looked around expectantly and presently a young man slowly elbowed through the crowd toward the platform.

The Hypnotist helped him up the steps and seated him in a chair.

"Relax," said the Hypnotist. "Presently you will be asleep and you will do exactly what I tell you to do."

The young man squirmed on the chair, grinding self-consciously toward the crowd.

The Hypnotist caught his attention, fixing his enormous eyes on him, and the young man stopped squirming.

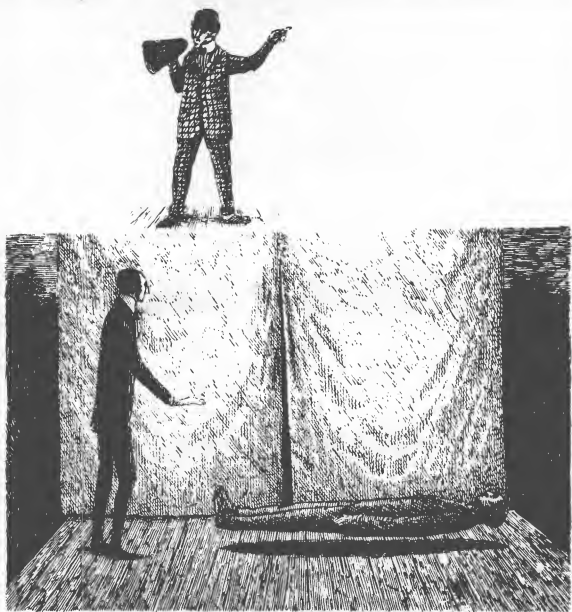
Suddenly someone in the crowd threw a large ball of colored popcorn toward the platform. The popcorn arched over the lights, landing squarely atop the head of the young man sitting in the chair.

He jerked sideways, almost falling off the chair, and the crowd, quiet a moment before, guffawed boisterously.

The Hypnotist was furious. He turned scarlet and literally shook with rage as he glared at the crowd.

"Who threw that?" he demanded in a choking voice.

The crowd grew silent.



**"Do not stand up—rise
from the platform!"**
the Hypnotist commanded.
"Rise from the platform!"
His dark eyes became
dark and luminous-looking
and the crowd shivered.
"Rise!"

The Hypnotist continued to glare at them. At length the color left his face and he stopped trembling, but his brilliant eyes remained baleful.

Finally he nodded to the young man seated on the platform, dismissing him with brief thanks, and turned again toward the crowd.

"Due to the interruption," he announced in a low voice, "it will be necessary to recommence the demonstration—with a new subject. Perhaps the person who threw the popcorn would care to come up?"

At least a dozen people in the crowd turned to gaze at someone who stood half in shadow at the rear of the gathering.

The Hypnotist spotted him at once; his dark eyes seemed to smolder. "Perhaps," he said in a purring, mocking voice, "the one who interrupted is afraid to come up. He prefers to hide in the shadows and throw popcorn!"

The culprit voiced a sudden exclamation and then pushed belligerently toward the platform. His appearance was not in any way remarkable; in fact, he somewhat resembled the first young man, and any casual observer would have placed the two of them in the farm-laborer class, neither more nor less capable than the average.

The second young man sat down in the platform chair with a distinct air of defiance and for some minutes visibly fought the Hypnotist's suggestion to relax. Presently, however, his aggressiveness disappeared and he dutifully stared into the smoldering eyes opposite his own.

In another minute or two he arose at the Hypnotist's command and lay flat on his back on the hard planks of the platform. The crowd gasped.

"You will fall asleep," the Hypnotist told him. "You will fall asleep. You are falling asleep. You are falling asleep. You are asleep and you will do anything which I command you to do. Anything which I command you to do. Anything..."

His voice droned on, repeating repetitious phrases, and the crowd grew perfectly silent.

Suddenly a new note entered the Hypnotist's voice and the audience became tense.

"Do not stand up—but *rise from the platform!*" the Hypnotist commanded. "*Rise from the platform!*" His dark eyes became wild and luminous-looking and the crowd shivered.

"Rise!"

Then the crowd drew in its collective breath with an audible start.

The young man lying rigid on the platform, without moving a muscle, began to ascend horizontally. He arose slowly, almost imperceptibly at first, but soon with a steady and unmistakable acceleration.

"*Rise!*" the Hypnotist's voice rang out.

The young man continued to ascend, until he was feet off the platform, and still he did not stop.

The crowd was sure it was some kind of trick, but in spite of themselves they stared open-mouthed. The young man appeared to be suspended and moving in mid-air without any possible means of physical support.

Abruptly the focus of the crowd's attention was shifted; the Hypnotist clasped a hand to his chest, staggered, and crumpled to the platform.

There were calls for a doctor. The barker in the checkered suit appeared out of the tent and bent over the motionless form.

He felt for a pulse, shook his head and straightened up. Someone offered a bottle of whiskey, but he merely shrugged.

Suddenly a woman in the crowd screamed.

Everyone turned to look at her and a second later followed the direction of her gaze.

Immediately there were further cries—for the young man whom the Hypnotist had put to sleep was still ascending. While the crowd's attention had been distracted by the fatal collapse of the Hypnotist, he had continued to rise. He was now a good seven feet above the platform and moving inexorably upward. Even after the death of the Hypnotist, he continued to obey that final ringing command: "*Rise!*"

The barker, eyes all but popping out of his head, made a frantic upward leap, but he was too short. His fingers barely brushed the moving figure above and he fell heavily back to the platform.

The rigid form of the young man continued to float upward, as if he were being hoisted by some kind of invisible pulley.

Women began screaming hysterically; men shouted. But no one knew what to do. A look of terror crept over the face of the barker as he stared up. Once he glanced wildly toward the sprawled shape of the Hypnotist.

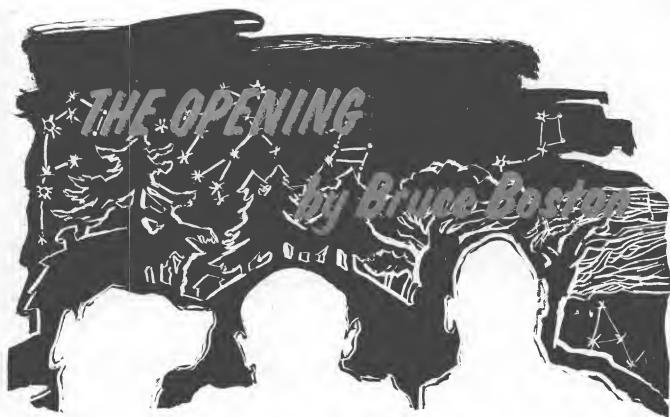
"Come down, Frank! Come down!" the crowd shrieked. "Frank! Wake up! Come down! Stop! Frank!"

But the rigid form of Frank moved ever upward. Up, up, until he was level with the top of the carnival tent, until he reached the height of the tallest trees—until he passed the trees and moved on into the soft moonlit sky of early October.

Many in the crowd threw hands over horror-stricken faces and turned away.

Those who continued to stare saw the floating form ascend into the sky until it was no more than a tiny speck, like a little cinder drifting far up near the moon.

Then it disappeared altogether. **17**



THEY WERE STRANGERS IN THE NIGHT.
AND ONE OF THEM WAS VERY STRANGE.

Raging, he yanked the liquor bottle from the cabinet. He strode across the kitchen tiles, the utility room with its built-in washer and dryer, and out the back door, slamming it behind.

"Howard!" she yelled. "Come back here!"

Beyond her voice he could still hear the drone of the television. Damn her, he thought, damn her to hell anyway. He kept moving, through the yard, knocking the gate open with the heel of his palm so it banged against the fencepost and the length of the structure rattled. Feeling the sting upon his palm, the jarring to his elbow as a kind of satisfaction, he started up the hill that rose behind his house.

A clear night for the Valley, for anywhere in the Los Angeles Basin. Despite the city lights for miles in every direction, a smattering of stars prevailed. The climb was mostly dirt, some bushes and weeds, a few scraggly trees Howard had never been able to identify. By the time he was halfway up he was breathing heavily. He was no longer young, and each day there were reminders.

Slowing his pace, he uncorked the bottle, took a pull and coughed in surprise. The mouthful erupted back onto the earth. He had meant to grab the scotch and had somehow come up with the creme de cacao. Cursing his wife once more, Howard continued to climb.

What the hell, he thought, he didn't really want to get drunk. He'd been on top of the booze for months and wasn't about to go back to it now. Of course, every time he even sniffed a cork she was after him about it. She was always starting something, he thought. He'd already forgotten what had set her off tonight. Sure enough, it ended with the same stupid and vicious game: each of them dredging up the past, hurling back and forth resent-

ments stockpiled over the years of their marriage.

Howard took another drink. His face scrunched up at the unpleasant taste. He swallowed anyway.

As he neared the crest of the hill he began to wander back and forth, searching the invisible ground more by touch than sight. He found the depression, a natural seat in the hard dirt, and collapsed into it. Wedging the bottle next to his leg, he sighed deeply. This was not the first time he had found himself here after one of their battles. Not the first, and he knew it wouldn't be the last. Sometimes he would kick the dirt and tear at the scratchy weeds like a frustrated child. Only he had children of his own. Grandchildren.

"Bitch," he whispered to the night air.

It was quiet except for the background hum of the freeway on the far side of the hill, a noise to which Howard was so accustomed he hardly noticed it anymore. He fished a cigarette from his shirt pocket and lit it up. All across the valley, singly and in irregular clumpings, the anonymous lights shone. And higher, in the sky, the faint outlines of constellations he had once studied but could no longer name. He exhaled a cloud of smoke, and the slight breeze streaming up the hill caused it to rise about his head. He breathed the night. Clean, with not even an aftertaste of the smog that seemed to cling to the palette on even the clearest of days. Instead something else, a faint sweetness, like sage or honeysuckle. Maybe that's what the trees were? Honeysuckle? Only he'd never seen any blossoms.

"Bitch," he repeated to the mute trees, and took another drink. Maybe the smell was only the creme de cacao, wafting from the open bottle.

Howard remembered how it once was. They had fled the East for California in the first years of

THE OPENING



their marriage. California, land of sunshine and opportunity. He had found his opportunities and made what he could of them, and they had not done badly. Each year their tanks were good, their cars new. Except for an occasional consultation he was retired, and still they were not doing badly. Yet he had discovered with the passing years that one's opportunities narrowed. There was never any turning back, he had learned that too. At times he felt trapped; though as he looked across the valley at the sea of lights, he consoled himself once again with the assurance that they were all trapped—locked into worlds of their own making, yet locked drum tight nonetheless. If freedom was what counted, then freedom was a full plate, a space of one's own.

A crushing of leaves in the bushes to his right, a heavy breathing. All at once the dog was upon him. Howard rolled back laughing as a slippery tongue fluttered against his cheek, a cold snout explored his ear. A low whistle from the same direction and the animal was bounding away. As Howard came up from the grass the sweet smell was overwhelming. He had spilled some of the liquor on himself.

"Sorry. I should have kept him on the leash." The man had come along the crest of the hill. "I didn't really expect to find anyone up here."

"That's okay," Howard laughed. "Surprised me for a second, but he's friendly enough." He could hear the dog crashing through the bushes behind them.

"Yes," the man answered, "it's in his nature."

He was slight and wore coveralls. The moon was not yet up, and it was too dark to make out his features. Howard normally avoided his neighbors, expecting the same courtesy. Yet he realized at this moment he welcomed the intrusion. Anything to take his mind off Beverly.

"Have a seat," he told the man. "It's a beautiful night."

"Yes, the stars are very bright."

The fellow sat down a few feet away, forearms resting on his knees and the dog's leash hanging between them. Despite the fact that Howard was sitting in a depression, their heads came to the same height.

"You live around here?"

"Over there." The man gestured, but Howard couldn't be sure in which direction.

"Have a drink?" Howard offered the bottle.

"No, thank you."

"Sorry, I should have brought an extra glass. I didn't expect to find anyone up here either. Just had a run-in with the wife, and I had to get away for a while."

The man laughed. "We all have to get away sometimes."

"Let's not say kidnapping," the man answered.

"Let's say 'by invitation.' And let's not call them little green men."

Howard realized he must be half drunk already if he was confessing his domestic squabbles to a complete stranger he had just met on a hillside. What the hell, he thought. He opened the bottle once more. "It's a beautiful night," he repeated.

"Yes, the Valley is lovely."

"Not like it used to be, though," Howard gestured with one arm to take in the scene before them. "I remember when half this land was orange groves, lemon trees, avocados. During the harvest you could smell them every evening. No damn pollution! And there didn't used to be a freeway over there either. It's sure not what it used to be."

"Everything changes."

That was some consolation, Howard thought. Digging in his pocket for another cigarette, he looked back to the sky. "Not everything," he said.

"Hm?"

"The stars," Howard lit up, cupping his palms for the flame. "They're just like when I was a kid. I used to be able to name quite a few. Now I have trouble even spotting the Dipper."

"There's Polaris," the stranger pointed to the northern sky, "that's part of your little Dipper." His hand swung to the west. "And that's the Big Dipper."

Howard could see his face more clearly now. He was young, hardly more than a kid. Yet he was completely bald. Unless he shaved his head.

"There's Procyon. Castor and Pollux, the twins. And that red one, that's Betelgeuse, in the constellation Orion."

With each pronouncement the man's forefinger seemed to jab at the heavens. There was something in his manner Howard distrusted. He was too sure of himself. Like he was a saint or something. It all made sense, Howard thought. The shaven head. Those funny coveralls, incongruous on such a small man. There were some pretty strange religions knocking about Southern California these days.

"What are you, an astronomer or something?" Howard asked.

"Not really," the man laughed again knowingly, "let's just say I'm interested in the stars. I've studied them. And you're wrong, you know. The stars change just like everything else. And the worlds with them. Just think, a million upon a million worlds up there, all changing."

Howard noticed that in profile the man's head was not only shaven but oddly shaped, elongated, almost like a bullet. Not far behind them the dog had

found something and was pawing at the dirt. And I'm drunk, he thought, and so what? Running his finger around the grooved glass of the bottle's neck, he took another sip, allowing the liquor to pool on his tongue before swallowing.

"A million upon a million worlds." The man seemed strangely intent upon this subject of the stars. "Just think what it would be like to visit them."

"If there are even any worlds up there." Howard burped noiselessly. "We don't know for sure, do we?"

"They're up there all right. Believe me."

The knowingness again, the superiority. "Well," Howard countered, "it's not likely we'll find out in our lifetimes."

"Don't be too sure. Have you ever thought about this?" The man paused for emphasis. "People disappear all the time, sometimes without a trace. No final messages. Their bodies never turn up. Have you ever thought that maybe they've gone to the stars?"

Howard laughed. "What are you trying to tell me? That you think little green men in flying saucers are kidnapping people from Earth and taking them to other planets?"

"Let's not say kidnapping," the man answered. "Let's say 'by invitation.' And let's *not* call them little green men."

His chance conversation on a hillside was surely taking a peculiar turn, Howard thought. Then the dog was by his side once more, nuzzling his shoulder. The sweet smell was back and it was stronger than ever. It was the dog, he realized, not the creme de cacao. Though it was not unpleasant. He ran his hand over the animal's head, tousling its fur, along its side, down the leather spines running the length of its back.

The leather spines running the length of its back!

Howard sat frozen in drunkenness and sudden fear while the stranger continued to speak.

"A million upon a million worlds up there. Just about any kind of world a person could want to live on. Why, you could take your pick. Tell me, suppose you had the chance. Would you go?"

Then the man touched his arm, and the stars in the sky, the lights of the Valley, seemed to lose their moorings and come spinning toward him in a sickening rush.

He was sitting on a hillside in the San Fernando Valley. He could feel the sharpness of a rock wedged against his thigh. On one side of him was a . . . dog? . . . who smelled like honeysuckle, and he was touching its fur. On the other side a man with a bullet-shaped head was touching his arm. There were

chills, not so much running up and down his back, but lodged solidly in his shoulder blades. His vision was somewhere else. And wherever that somewhere was, the worlds were there, just as the man had promised. Changing landscapes rose up before him and fell back beneath.

Rain forests with trees the size of mountains, mountains the size of moons. A green sunset on a geometric plain littered with ancient statuary, broken columns, toppled giants. Worlds still volcanic and in flux with huge slabs of rock wrenched perpendicular from the earth. Ice worlds sealed in the soft stillness of perpetual winter. Cities of perpetual light where thousands of strangely human configurations thronged the arching streets and colored waters flowed. Beneath a naphtha sky gray-blue tentacles reaching . . .


Howard bolted. He wrenched his arm free, and staggered to his feet and began to run. Not in the direction of his house—God forbid the man should discover where he lived!—but down the opposite side of the hill, toward the freeway. He fell once on the uneven ground, but tottered to his feet once more. He kept moving.

Where the bushes grew thickest, ignoring the branches scratching his bare arms and face, he dived among them. Hugging the ground in this temporary shelter, he felt nausea clawing its way up his belly, the beating of his heart. Somehow he had held onto the bottle through it all and now he swallowed more of the liquor to keep down what was already down. He heard the familiar noise of the freeway, louder now, and he fastened upon it. The coming and going of ordinary people, ordinary commerce. He prayed that the animal could not track by sense of smell like its earthly counterpart.

When Howard came to on the rough ground he thought he was having a nightmare. His head was splitting and his joints were stiff. For several moments he wasn't sure where he was. The noise of a semi passing on the freeway brought him back. He uncured and sat up. Then he remembered the fight with his wife and grabbing the bottle. The heel of his palm was sore where he had banged it against the back gate. He remembered meeting someone on the hill. Further recollection seemed to descend into a haze of drunkenness.

The moon was now up, and it was easier for him to make his way. He stumbled back down the hillside to his house. He found the television still running and turned it off.

"Beverly!" Howard called. "Bev!"

Off to her goddamn sister's again, he thought, before falling fully clothed across the bed. Not until the next morning did he discover both cars still in the garage. 

Halloween III

THIS YEAR'S ENTRY IN THE SEASONAL HORROR SWEEPSTAKES COMBINES CELTIC MAGIC, MICROCHIPS, AND MASKS THAT TRANSFORM MORE THAN JUST YOUR LOOKS. JAMES VERNIERE REPORTS.

No night of the year so titillates and inspires the popular imagination as the evening of October 31, also known as All Hallows' Eve or, more commonly, Halloween. It is the night the witches, hobgoblins, and beasts that populate the collective unconscious are made flesh as children dress up in costume and go trick-or-treating. Some scholars believe that Halloween is the vestige of a pagan ritual, originally intended to placate the dead, that was adopted by the early Christian church in an attempt to win converts from the hordes of unbelievers who stubbornly clung to old gods. According to Chambers' encyclopedic *Book of Days: A Miscellany of Popular Antiquities*, Halloween "is that time . . . when the supernatural influences prevail. It is that night set apart for a universal walking abroad of spirits, both of the visible and invisible world." In a less macabre vein, Halloween was also a time when, according to ancient Celtic tradition, young women might by means of divination determine the identity of future spouses. The ancient Irish believed that all the souls in purgatory were released on All Hallows' Eve to roam free, apparently to do mischief—if not wreak a little havoc. The Celts called the festival Samhain (from the Gaelic *Sam*, meaning summer, and *fuin*, meaning end), and prehistoric Druids called Halloween the Eve of Samhan, after Baal Samhan, the god of the dead who devised punishments for the recently deceased.

The myths of Halloween are various, but one thing is certain: It is a time of the year when people love to be frightened. No one knows this better than filmmaker John Carpenter (*Halloween*, *The Fog*, *Escape from New York*, *The Thing*). In 1978, after making two features that fared poorly at the box office, Carpenter made a film based on a script called *The Baby-Sitter Murders*. Ultimately titled *Halloween*, the film became the largest-grossing independent feature in movie history.

As a result, the film *Halloween* has become as much a part of the seasonal ritual as bobbing for apples. So popular is Carpenter's film that it is re-released each October, racking up millions in rentals. It has also generated a host of "stalk and slash" imitations and two sequels under the aegis of the original *Halloween* filmmakers, Carpenter and Debra Hill, who produced both Rick Rosenthal's *Halloween II* and Tommy Lee

Wallace's soon-to-be released *Halloween III*.

As with most sequels, none of *Halloween*'s offspring capture the unique magic of the original. *Halloween* came as a complete surprise to genre film buffs who frequent drive-ins and second-run houses in the hopes of finding an unheralded gem among the many low-budget horror films that are mass-released during the witching season. It was in a class by itself: a stylish shocker, full of wit and suspense. In an eerie evocation of the spirit of *Halloween*, the film opened with the image of a little boy named Michael Myers, dressed for trick-or-treating, who was spying on his teenage sister and her boyfriend as they made love. Enraged (the element of incestuous longing was an added *frisson* absent in *Halloween II*, where it would have made great sense), Michael stabbed his sister to death as she sat at her bedroom mirror seductively combing her hair. After escaping from an insane asylum where he had been committed for fifteen years under the care of Dr. Sam Loomis (Donald Pleasence), Michael returned to his hometown of Haddonfield, Illinois (producer Hill was born in New Jersey's Haddonfield) on October 30 to seek out more nubile victims, thus beginning another reign of terror.

One of the strengths of Carpenter's original *Halloween* was a fine performance by Jamie Lee Curtis (who went on to be dubbed the queen of horror films) as Laurie Strode, the virginal teenager who, unlike her popular (i.e., sexually active) girlfriends, found herself without a date and spent Halloween night baby-sitting. The bloody carnage in which Laurie's friends were systematically carved up by the masked, grown-up Michael (dubbed "The Shape" in the film's credits) was only a prelude to the final showdown between the resourceful Laurie and the persistent killer. In fact, Carpenter's final scene has become a kind of classic. Who can forget how Carpenter's weird throbbing music started up again after the killer's body mysteriously vanished? Was there ever any doubt that a *Halloween II* was on the way?

Although Carpenter now soft-pedals the influence he exerted on the first sequel, his mark is clearly present. Billed as co-producer and co-screenwriter, Carpenter handpicked Rick Rosenthal, whose only previous film credit was a short called *The Toyer*, to direct. Intriguingly, the plot of *Halloween II* overlapped the



Halloween is a time of children and masks — only this time the masks are deadly, and the children just happen to be those of the movie's hero, Dr. John Challis.

In the emergency room of the local hospital, a seemingly crazed shopkeeper named Harry Grimbridge (Al Berry) delivers a bizarre warning to Challis: "They're going to kill us. All of us."



That night, Grimbridge is permanently silenced by a shadowy — and highly efficient — assassin.



The lunatic mask-maker Conal Cochran (Dan O'Herlihy) strikes a macabre pose with one of his "toys."



Halloween just wouldn't be the same without a beautiful imperiled girl (left, Stacey Nelkin as Ellie Grimbridge, the shopkeeper's nubile daughter) and, above, a fiery death (as one of Cochran's mysterious grey-clad assassins immolates himself to avoid capture) ...



... and it certainly wouldn't be the same without the traditional costumes. Here Challis and Ellie come face to face with Cochran's weapons of destruction — ostensibly harmless Halloween masks.



Something fishy is going on at Cochran's "Silver Shamrock" toy factory, and Challis receives a shocking surprise when he questions an old woman who works there.

original by about a minute. Once again we saw Michael gunned down. Once again we saw him vanish. The film also reunited Laurie, the killer, and Dr. Loomis. As in the first film the Shape stalked Haddonfield, but this time his victims were chosen at random (Carpenter wasn't going to be accused of misogyny again), and the killings were depicted in such brutally graphic detail that the film was more reminiscent of Sean Cunningham's *Friday the 13th* than of the original *Halloween*. (Some wags dubbed this film *Halloween the 13th*.) There was one death by stabbing, one by bludgeoning, one by scalding, one by a hypo in the eyeball, and one by exsanguination. Set, for the most part, in a dark, deserted hospital, *Halloween II* was little more than a formula "stalk-and-slash" with a fiery climax.

To this day there is controversy surrounding the making of *Halloween II*. Director Rick Rosenthal claims that Carpenter, who expressed dissatisfaction with the film, shot scenes of graphic violence without Rosenthal's participation or approval, and had them inserted after the original production had wrapped. Carpenter claims he merely added connecting material and a couple of scenes to make the film "stronger." Whatever the case, *Halloween II* was a disappointment. Gone were the atmospheric evocations of Halloween night, gone was

the "bogeyman" element, and little was done with the very clever plot twist in which Laurie was revealed as Michael's younger sister. The filmmakers trotted out this revelation, let it take a bow, and sent it back to the closet. They did the same with the mythological mumbo-jumbo about Samhain that Dr. Loomis spouted. What was left was just another example of slaughterhouse cinema.

By the end of *Halloween II*, the prospects of a *Halloween III* seemed dim and more than a little uninviting. The Shape and his nemesis were burned to a cinder, and Laurie seemed terminally traumatized (by the script, no doubt). But money talks: according to industry estimates, a sequel promises to return at least sixty percent of the original's gross. And so *Halloween III* (subtitled *Season of the Witch*) will be released in the fall of 1982. Although Carpenter and Hill produced (together with notorious *schlockmeister* Dino DeLaurentiis), this time the script was assigned to veteran British scenarist Nigel Kneale, author of the famed Quatermass series: *The Quatermass Xperiment* (U.S. title, *The Creeping Unknown*, 1955), *Quatermass II* (U.S. title, *Enemy from Space*, 1957), and *Quatermass and the Pit* (U.S. title, *Five Million Years to Earth*, 1967). Kneale also wrote the screen adaptations of John Osborne's *Look Back in Anger* (1958), *The Entertainer*



Buddy Kupfer (Ralph Strall) and his wife Betty (Jadeen Barbor) watch their son L'il Buddy (Bradley Schachter) moments before a monstrous transformation ...



... triggered by watching a certain commercial on television. Just as *Psycho* made millions afraid to take a shower, *Halloween III* may make you think twice before donning a Halloween mask.



In a climactic scene, Cochran and his henchmen capture Challis in their toy factory ...



... and force him to wear one of Cochran's deadly masks.

(1960), H. G. Wells's *First Men in the Moon* (1964), and Dennis Wheatley's *The Devil's Own* (1966). Recently, Kneale was brought to Hollywood to write the script for John Landis's now-postponed 3-D remake of *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, and was recommended to Carpenter by director Joe Dante (*The Howling*).

Kneale's script combines Celtic black magic, the theft of a piece of Stonehenge, a diabolical Irish toymaker, and modern computer technology. The goal was to make an entirely original movie based upon the Halloween tradition and using the original film's title, but otherwise having nothing in common with the previous films. Indeed, Kneale's script is actually more science fiction than horror, although it does contain the requisite bloodletting (e.g. an eye-gouging, a decapitation, *et al.*).

To helm the second sequel to the original *Halloween*, Carpenter has once again chosen a first-time director—Tommy Lee Wallace—who is also Carpenter's oldest friend. (In view of the conflicts that developed between Carpenter and Rosenthal, we hope Carpenter and Wallace remain friends.) The two went to high school together in Bowling Green, Kentucky, and attended film school at the University of Southern California. Wallace served as editor of the original *Halloween* and *The Fog*, and was production designer on Carpenter's *Dark Star*,

Assault on Precinct 13, *Halloween*, and *The Fog*. Together he and Carpenter wrote *El Diablo*, a Western Carpenter is set to direct.

The plot of *Halloween III* revolves around a lunatic mask-maker's conspiracy to bring a plague of demons on America the night of Halloween. The evil genius behind the scheme is a wealthy toy manufacturer—and demented prankster—named Cochran (Dan O'Herlihy), whose ambition is to return the world to the rule of the dark Celtic powers of ancient times. In the sleepy town of Santa Mira (the same name as the town in the original *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), Cochran has built a factory that mass produces three ornate but inexpensive glow-in-the-dark Halloween masks: a witch, a jack-o'-lantern, and a skull. The trick is that these masks contain a hidden chip and a bit of Stonehenge dust that, when triggered by a television commercial, unleash an unspeakable horror. No one suspects that these popular masks are deadly until a physician, Dr. Daniel Challis (Tom Atkins), and Ellie Grimbridge (Stacey Nelkin) go to Santa Mira to investigate the gruesome murder of Ellie's father. There they uncover the secret of Cochran's toy factory—and what Carpenter and his associates hope will be a terror so unique that hordes of filmgoers will be taking their trick-or-treat money to the box office this fall. 17



Country of the Dead

Photos by Randy Chisholm

Text by John Bensink

THE ORIGINAL 'SILENT MAJORITY'—THE DEAD—
MAY NO LONGER BE THE MAJORITY.
AND THEY'RE CERTAINLY NOT SILENT.

Fully half of all the people who ever lived on the planet are now alive—or so the demographers tell us. We've become more fecund; we've learned how to make ourselves live longer. While no one serious talks of immortality, scientists speak of possible lifespans of one hundred forty years. But a morbid irony is at work here: As we increase our longevity, our numbers growing exponentially, we simply create more of us who are waiting for the ineluctable than ever before.

The ineluctable is the country of the dead, and the inhabitants of that place wait for us to join them. And they're a patient lot: Time won't run out on them now.

And you and I, by the very fact of our being alive, must at least once in a while think about our being dead. About how we'll be remembered by those who knew us. About how we'll "go out." About who might grieve for us. About who will *know* we were here.

Epitaphs, the inscriptions tombstones bear in addition to the basic statistics of name and dates and familial relation, are usually interesting to us, but can rarely be enjoyed in the abstract. We probably tend to reject or approve the sentiment inscribed, often deciding if a particular one would be suitable for ourselves.

Modern-day inscriptions, unfortunately, are usually pedestrian or (worse) "religious." They seem canned because they are; they're

chosen from a list of prepared verses the monument salesman has on hand, and for the survivors, the creative act is usually limited to choosing one of several script faces.

Surely there are alive in the land now individuals brash enough to pen their own apt inscriptions before they die—or nifty enough to have cut into stone *real* truths about relatives or friends. Surely they exist, but surely they are rare.

The epitaphs on these pages, from Charles L. Wallis's *American Epitaphs, Grave and Humorous* (Dover, 1973), are from another time—in many cases, from a time going back two centuries or more. Some are irreverent, some are funny, some are thought-provoking, some are heart-wrenchingly poignant. But they all suggest the *acceptance* of death as something swift or cruel or totally unexpected . . . and inevitable. (Many early tombstones bore *Memento Mori*—"Remember you must die.") They suggest another certainty as well: that these post-humous messages *mean* something, that the people who've moved on to the next country will continue in the memories and thoughts of those they've left behind. That hope is perhaps best expressed in the epitaph on a marker in a cemetery in Milford, Connecticut; it's for farmer Richard C. S. Pond, who died in 1904 at age thirty-five, and it reads:

To live in hearts
We leave behind
Is not to die.

Country^{of} the Dead



On a marker in Bradley, South Carolina,
for Elizabeth Cothran, died 1925,
age eighty-two; erected by her husband:

*Now Aint
That Too Bad*

On a marker in Annapolis Royal,
Nova Scotia, for Florianna Frobes,
died 1815:

*18 years a maiden
1 year a wife
1 day a mother
Then I lost my life.*

On a marker in Paxton,
Massachusetts, for Sidney Ellis,
died 1836, age seven weeks:

*He lived
He wept
He smiled
He groaned
And died.*

On a marker in Chicago:

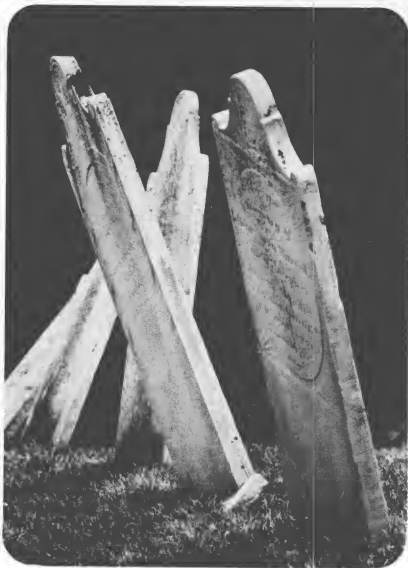
*Abbie Lomax
Died Nov. 23 1871,
Aged 6 months.
Here lies a dear relic
Of the great Chicago fire.*

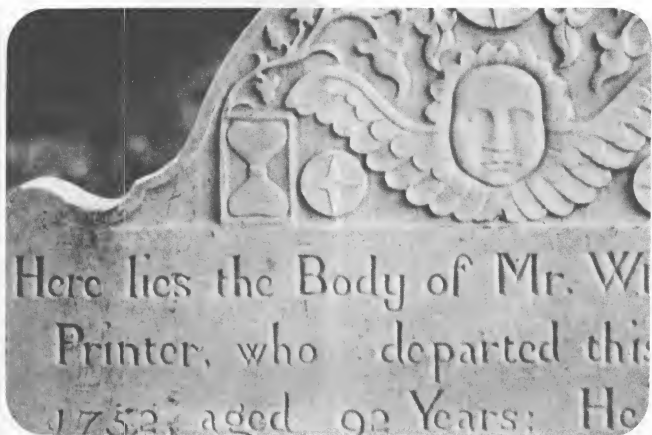
On a marker in Chicago, for
Charles DuPlessis, died 1907,
age fifty-three:

*The Greatest Person
I Have Ever Known.*

On a marker in Hamden, Connecticut,
for Mill Gaylord, died 1806, age five:

*Soon ripe
Soon rotten
Soon gone
But not forgotten.*





The epitaph Benjamin Franklin wrote for himself (first published in 1771):

*The Body of BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,
Printer*

*Like the Covering of an old Book,
Its Contents torn out,
And stript of its Lettering and Gilding,
Lies here, Food for Worms;
But the Work shall not be lost,
It will (as he believed) appear once more,
In a new and more beautiful Edition,
Corrected and amended
By the Author.*

The actual epitaph used, according to the wishes expressed in Franklin's will, merely listed his and his wife's names.

On a marker in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire, for Meshech Weare, died 1784, age seventy:

*He was one of those good men
who dare to love their country
and be poor.*



Country of the Dead

On a marker on Ocracoke Island,
North Carolina, for Agnes Howard,
died 1857, age seventy-six; erected by her husband:

*She was!
But words are wanting to say what
Think what a wife should be
She was that*

From a marker in Girard, Pennsylvania:

*In memory of
Ellen Shannon
Aged 26 Years
Who was fatally burned
March 21st 1870
by the explosion of a lamp
filled with "R.E. Danforth's
Non Explosive
Burning Fluid"*

On a marker in Portland, Oregon, for Helen Christine
Lehman, died December 27, 1908:

With us one day.

On a marker in Rapid City, South Dakota:

*He found a rope and picked it up,
And with it walked away.
It happened that to the other end
A horse was hitched, they say.
They took the rope and tied it up
Unto a hickory limb.
It happened that the other end
Was somehow hitched to him.*

From a marker by an Indian mound
near Cooperstown, New York:

*White Man, Greeting!
We, near whose bones you stand,
Were Iroquois. The wide land
which now is yours was ours.
Friendly hands have given back
To us enough for a tomb.*



On a marker in Granville, Ohio, for
an unnamed daughter of
Clarissa and Elizur Abbot, died 1824:

*Joyless sojourner was I
Only born to gasp and die.*

Common epitaphs (these two, or
very close variations of them,
can be found in cemeteries
throughout the United States):

*Death is a debt
By nature due
I've paid my debt
And so must you.*

*Behold my friends as you pass by
As you are now so once was I
As I am now, so you must be
Prepare for death and follow me.*



Country^{of} the Dead



An epitaph—in its entirety—appearing on a boulder in Cripple Creek, Colorado, near the Mount Pisgah Cemetery:

*He Called
Bill Smith
A Liar.*

On a marker in Springdale, Ohio:

*Here lies Jane Smith, wife
of Thomas Smith, marble cutter.
This monument was erected
by her husband as a tribute
to her memory and a specimen of his work.
Monuments of the same style 350 dollars.*

For Patrick Henry, died 1799,
in Red Hill, Virginia:

His fame his best epitaph.

On a marker in San Francisco, for
Silas W. Sanderson, justice of the
Supreme court of California,
died 1886, age sixty-two:

Final Decree.



On a marker in Westernville, New York,
for William Reese, died 1872, age twenty-one:

*This is what I expected but
not so soon.*

Lost on a West Virginia surveying party
in 1795, William Strange carved this
epitaph for himself. It appears
on the tree next to which his
bones were found years later:

*Strange is my name
and I'm on strange ground
And strange it is
I can't be found.*

On a marker in Macon, Georgia, for
Dr. J. J. Subers, died 1916, age seventy-eight:

*Been Here
and Gone
Had a Good Time.*

On a marker in Vineland, New Jersey, for
Chalres A. Miller, died 1905, age sixty-five:

*I came I know not whence,
I go I know not whither.*

An epitaph from the old West, exact site unknown,
published in a newspaper in the 1880s:

*Here lays Butch
We planted him raw
He was quick on the trigger
But slow on the draw. ☞*



THAT YOWLING CAT
WAS KEEPING HER AWAKE.
BUT WHAT IF IT WASN'T A CAT?

Night Cry

by Katherine M. Turney

Miss Trudeau opened her eyes. "Oh, pooh," she said softly, exasperated. And it had been such a nice, lovely dream, too, one of those that came back so pleasantly when she would awake in the morning.

It had been vivid, in panoramic color, more hues than real life. She had been running, jumping, rolling in an undulating plain of wildflowers, delicately clouded sky above, soil soft as down beneath her bare feet. Her face had been once more full of the bloom of youth, turned toward the warm, friendly sun, her ears ringing delightedly with the call of birds, the hum of insects.

And it had been popped, exactly like a balloon, by that noise.

The sound had been quite clear, so much so as to practically demand attention. A short, high, sort of clipped sound, something like the yowl of a cat that didn't have its voice up to snuff. Very annoying. That's what it was; she was almost certain of it. A cat. Most likely the Harrises's tom, Stripes.

She tossed the sheet away from her slight, fragile frame. She was fully awake now, and only a cup of hot tea with lemon would make her drowsy. If nothing else, at least after seventy-six years on this earth she'd learned how to put herself to sleep.

Miss Trudeau hefted the window open and leaned cautiously out of her third-floor window, hands on the sill. The night was cool, still, a little sliver of moon peeking out from the cloud cover whenever it could. Only a very few lit windows indicated any life inside the tall, dark apartment buildings surrounding her own. It may not have been the best neighborhood, but it was quiet and secure most of the time, and quiet was one thing Miss Trudeau valued.

She stepped back from the window and felt the cool evening draft chill her. She'd leave it for a short while: fresh air also helped get her to sleep. She pulled her woolen nightgown close about her, and went off to fix her tea.

Miss Trudeau opened her eyes.

Now this was ridiculous. The cat had waited until just after she'd finally dropped off to sleep before yowling again. It was exactly the same sort of sound, as well—short, high, suddenly cutting itself off like the twist of a knob to a water hose. Just enough to bring her back full awake.

"Honestly," she said, becoming angry, her teeth grinding slightly against her lower lip. She'd certainly be giving a piece of her mind to the Harrises. A cat that noisy shouldn't be allowed out when decent people are trying to get some sleep. She had things to do tomorrow, or, rather, today.

But, then again, it might not be Stripes at all; it could be another cat.

What if it wasn't a cat?

She lay back on her bed in the slowly sliding moonlight and gathered her sheets in her hands, clasping them to her breast. Now that she thought back on it, she realized that the noise she'd heard wasn't really that much like the sound of a cat.

It sounded more human.

No, that was silly. Besides, why would someone make a strange sound like that, and why so long between? It was almost as if it were planned.

Planned? No, of course not. Perhaps a child. Yes, that could be the sound: a child, probably hungry, crying out in the night for its mother, as children will. She'll wake up, as Miss Trudeau did, and give it a warm formula. There were a few young couples in the complex, and some of them did have small children. She had never had children herself, but—

The cry sounded again.

Without thinking, she pulled the sheets closer. That didn't even sound like a child, that time. Hardly even human.

The police. She'd have to go to the police and tell them what she'd heard. They would take care of it, wouldn't they?

But what if they just thought she was a dotty old woman who heard strange sounds all the time? How could she prove what she'd heard? In this echo chamber of an apartment complex she couldn't even be sure where the sounds came from in the first place, much less what they were. She saw herself in the precinct station, telling her story again and again to an indifferent sergeant, filling out reports, looking through books of mug shots, everything she'd ever seen on television. And she knew where it would finally end: face to face with someone she probably didn't even know, staring at each other, memorizing every small detail of a face, the turn of a



hand, the cut of a blouse; threatening, terribly cold eyes looking deep into hers and promising—

She could not get involved. She knew she wouldn't be able to take the stress. Daybreak was only two or three short hours away, and then someone would do something about the sound. Someone younger, someone stronger. She had to try to go back to sleep. Yes. That was it. Just go back to sleep. Everything would be all right in the morning, when the new sun would wash the earth clean of the night's imaginings.

She concentrated on sleep, closing her eyes and lying back in the soft, comforting bed, pushing

the short, high cry of a lovesick cat from her thoughts.

Miss Trudeau opened her eyes.

This time there had been no sound to wake her.

Heavy silence settled like a muffler as the moon found a moment to slip out from behind the clouds and flood pale gray over her room through the open window.

A glint of tempered steel hung above her.

She only had time for a single high, horrified cry before the axe came down. 17

THE SPOOK MAN

By Al Sarrantonio

HIS CAPE WAS BLACK, HIS EYES WERE HOODED.
AND HE WAS PARTICULARLY FOND OF CHILDREN.

The Spook Man came to town. Mothers and fathers locked their doors. Dogs hid in the doghouses. Mailmen, ignoring their credo, left mail undelivered and went to bars or home to scolding wives. Schools closed up, locked and bolted their playground gates and sealed their windows. The grasses turned brown; even the weather changed, trading warmth for sudden chill and seeping sunshine for blustery blocks of gray-black clouds. The town tried to hide.

The Spook Man set up on the edge of a baseball field. His rolling home was a brooding many-wheeled thing in All-Souls' colors; those that chanced to look at it said it was as big as a house or as small as a horse-trailer. No two gave the same description. Some said it had a hundred windows, hung with black lace and with flowerpots filled with dead daisies; others described it as sad and shallow, a hobo's retreat. There were gables and then there weren't. A turret and then not. A porch with a jet-black rocking chair that vanished into thin air. A steeple that became nothing. Soon no one looked at it.

The waiting began. Children were locked in cellars, kept in tight bedrooms, told to glue themselves, literally, to television sets. Children were overfed, told to eat and keep their eyes off the windows. Most boarded up their windows, sealed them tight against the dim brown light that suffused everything and tried to leak in. Telephone games became the rule of the day: Susie called Billie called Carl called Maisie. Parents kept a watchful ear to see that games and tv were all that were talked about. Parents were everywhere children were; there was more parent-love exhibited than ever before, and this made Susie and Billie and Pete and Jerry and all the rest nervous.

The Spook Man waited.

Four houses kept four children locked up especially tight. These were Harry and Brenda and Chubby and Larry—the four who lived, breathed, and ate monsters. When the new werewolf movie came out they were first on line; when the binding

wire was snipped from the new eerie comics, they were hovering there with greedy eyes. No plastic creature model escaped them; no fright mask wasn't in their possession. Wax fangs covered their cavities; they walked in shuffling limps; spoke in Igor voices or baying howls.

Harry and Brenda and Chubby and Larry plotted. Each in their own house, with parents floating like balloons nearby, they used their Code.

"I loved the tv I saw last night," Harry told Brenda.

"We'll meet tonight to see the Spook Man," is what he meant.

"I ate a dozen cookies at one sitting yesterday," Chubby told Larry.

"Tonight the Spook Man," is what he said.

"Good books to read," is what Harry told them all.

"Ten-thirty by the playground gate," is what they knew.

As obedient as ever, the four watched television, read books and played games. They smiled like they always did. Then bedtime came, and the light went off, and each in turn climbed carefully out of pried-open windows.

They arrived in concert as a half-moon broke through the low sky. The clouds scudded, making the moon blink, and as it shone again, their eyes turned like pin-magnets on the Spook Man's place.

It was a house. This was no hobo's retreat. It was a house as sure as any of them lived in one. There were windows and a steeple and gables and a porch, and there was that jet-black rocking chair. It was magnificent and frightening. Victorian, Georgian, Tudor. Massive.

Black.


"Where are the wheels, how did it get there?" asked Chubby.

"I don't want to be here," said Larry.

"Come on," said Harry and Brenda at the same time.

There was only one door, a dark one of metal,





and they crept up to it. The sky overhead played tricks, turned bright and dark and all the colors of a thunderstorm. A thunderstorm threatened, went away, came back. Went away.

They reached the door.

The door opened.

The Spook Man was there.

"Ah," he said, from somewhere beneath his cape. The cape fluttered, twirled, snapped. A face was revealed, quickly hidden. Powder-white, red-tinted, empty, sharp. Behind him a thousand fireflies seemed to hover, blinking Christmas tree colors. There were mirrors back there, and curtains, and strings of hanging beads that tinkled in the swirling bellows breeze. And other things lurking.

"Come into my ghost cellar," the Spook Man whispered to Harry and Brenda and Larry and Chubby. His breath was apple wine, blossoms on a chill wind, October.

"Come in and see what's here," the Spook Man breathed at them. "Come see my ghosts and ghoulies. I have things that bump in the night and all day long. I have men with rubber faces. I have orange and black bats, and a hag with fingernails ten inches long. I have cats galore, with eyes so bright green and teeth so sharp you'll shudder. I have skeletons of white bone marble, bones that clack one against the other like graveside cymbals. There are red crisp Halloween apples with fangmarks in them, dunked for by vampires. The vampires are there too, red and black and hidden in upper corners with the spiders. There is something that looks like jello that oozes when you speak to it; something else so horrible that I've left it unnamed. *You* can name it," he said, pointing one long and insubstantial finger into Chubby's jacket-covered belly. "Or you or you or you," he continued, pointing to them all. He pulled his finger back, making a steeple with all of his fingers and leaning down over it to hover, helicopter-like, above them. "Won't you *please* coome in?"

"Sure we will," Harry blustered, pushing in front of the rest. He was brown, crisp haired, and bold, leader of the Four. "That's why we're here, isn't it?"

No one challenged him, but no one moved to follow either.

He mounted the short steps, passing under the Spook Man's cape. "Come on," he said.

They did.

"Excellent!" the Spook Man hissed, rolling his cape over each in turn like a bullfighter, counting each upon the head as he passed. He tapped Brenda twice, causing her to look at him from beneath her red hair.

"Twice knocks for red locks," the Spook Man said, smiling a grin that put wonderful goosepimples hands round her heart.

The found themselves in a black hallway, and

when they looked back for guidance the Spook Man was gone. A black wall cutting off the outside world was in his place.

"He's just trying to scare us," Harry said, some of the bluster gone from his voice.

"D-doing a good job," said Larry, youngest and least true of the quartet.

"Ahh," was Harry's reply, and they proceeded.

They felt along the walls, and the walls were damp and slippery. They were crypt walls. They gave off the smell of underground, as underground they went in a gentle slope.

Suddenly, piling one on the other in the darkness, there was a door with a white face on it.

Larry screamed, and Brenda and Chubby and Harry merely shivered.

The face looked through them with the bottomless holes of its eyes.

And said, "Quiet."

It was a Marley face, a face cut from the cloth of ghosts. It shimmered in and out of vision, now sharp, now wavering, now sharp again. It asked them their business. When they didn't answer, it asked who had sent them.

"The Spook Man," Brenda said in a rush.

"The Spook Man," the face intoned.

The door melted away, showing a stairway of glowing green steps leading down into absolute black. There could have been a great and deep hole in the earth on either side of those steps, for all they could see. There were steps, and nothing else.

"Let's," Harry said tentatively, meekly, maybe-we-shouldn'tly, "go."

"No," breathed the other three, but again they followed.

The steps sang like chimes. Soon, as the four of them stepped down, a harplike mix of bells rang out. The tones became deeper as they sank into the darkness, turning by sneaky degrees to the maddening screech of a stepped-on cat and then to the deep bellow of a funeral mass organ. The tones grew so low and thundering their stomachs rumbled. They looked back to see that the lights disappeared as they left them behind, and, to their horror, they found that along with the lights the steps disappeared too.

They found themselves at the bottom, huddled together, four bodies in the dark trying to fit into the space of one.

"I'm scared," Larry said.

"Don't be," Harry countered.

"Why not?" asked Chubby.

"Don't know," Harry admitted.

"Come on," said Brenda this time.

The darkness drifted before them. They sensed something just out of reach, taunting them, debating whether to move back or strike. Things ticked along the floor, brushed at their legs. Chubby felt a clawed



thing grab his ankle and release it in the same movement. Dusty things brushed their faces. When they covered their faces, dusty things brushed their hands.

"I'm scared!" Larry repeated.

"You're supposed to be," Harry tried, as all around them it grew lighter.

They could see themselves now, their trembling arms and deliciously knocking knees. They could see each other's wild faces. With quick eyes they looked down for the crawling, drifting things, but saw nothing.

A door creaked open in front of them.

"I'm scared I'm scared!" Larry screamed, turning to flee.

Something held him back. There was a wall a foot behind them, moving up on them all the time, compelling them to move on. Larry scratched at it, beginning to cry. Harry and Chubby grabbed him, pulled him through the doorway after them.

A voice sounded, the Spook Man's voice, and Larry quieted immediately.

"Welcome to my cellar," it said.

Blackness descended then. And then a cacophony of lights.

Fangs, radium-bright, flew at them from every corner. Deep and ponderous chains were dragged before them. Around them. A cauldron made its appearance, bubbling and roiling green-hot liquid. It stirred itself, and then was stirred in turn by the vilest of witches—warts, cackle, and all. The cauldron evaporated, and then the witch was on her broom, coming straight at them and veering up and over at the last second in a steep angle. Skulls appeared at the four corners of the room, at head-height, and then skeletons winked into view below them. A skeletal rattle-dance commenced.

Harry and Chubby and Brenda danced with it. All hints of fear had gone, replaced by wild abandon. They danced like wood creatures, aping the gestures of their bony mates. They laughed.

Larry tried to laugh. Instead he made a compromise, painting his mouth with a horrible rictuslike smile that did little to hide his paralysis. He was paralyzed by fear; horrified by the revel of his wild friends. He wanted to be home, under the sheets and under layer on layer of patchwork quilt, listening to nothing but his own even breathing and the silence of his self-made night. He wanted Mother and Father to be out in the living room, further boarding the windows. He wanted Sis to be in the bedroom next door, sleeping safe with her lemon-yellow duck clasped under her sucking thumb. He wanted the tv to be on; the radio to be on; he wanted to play games, Scrabble and Parchesi and hearts and rummy. He wanted, along with everyone else, the Spook Man to be gone.

Larry's rictus grin grew wider.

The monsters came now.

Brenda and Harry and Chubby cheered. Here they all were, the models they had built and the comics they had collected come to life. They came in a dancing procession, out of the dark and back into it again. First Frankenstein, green, square, and parading false life, his arms frozen in front; then Dracula—no, *two* Draculas, snarling and circling each other like caged lady tigers, each seeking to snap redly at the other's neck. Mummies followed; then wolfmen howling at artificial moons that blinked on above; then sea creatures of all sorts, dripping seaweed and smelling of salt and rotting fish. Then the invaders from Space, each more tentacled and more colorful than the one preceding, with breathing apparatus and bulging eyes. There were bat-men and bat-women, giant insects galore, a gaggle of hairless beasts slowly diminishing in number as the glutinous blob-creature behind them ate them off one at a time. There were men with pumpkin heads and men with fly heads, men with dogs' heads, men with no heads. Growling rabbits. Mammoth frogs. Titanic rats, some so crazed they were eating themselves. Armless, legless, eyeless things; things that crawled and snapped and clicked; slimy things; things that went *fil* and were gone before they could be identified. Creatures of the night. Creatures of every underground imagination.

Horrid things.

Chubby and Brenda and Harry celebrated each monster's passing. With each new fright their huzzahs grew. Here was every nightmare they had ever dreamed about served up like breakfast, the nastiest breakfast there ever was. The monsters came and went, invoking death and rot and damp earth.

Chubby suddenly stopped cheering.

As if a spell had broken, he looked at the faces of his three friends and found only on Larry's what he wanted to see.

"I don't think this is so much fun anymore," he said in a bare whisper.

Larry looked to him with hope; Harry and Brenda were lost in the procession of evil.

"I think I want to leave," Chubby said a little louder.

"I want to go home," Larry joined in without hesitation.

Harry and Brenda showed no interest in them.

"I don't want to be here!" Larry shouted above the flapping of batwings, the bellowing of the not-alive.

Brenda grabbed him and howled, demonlike, into his face.

Chubby momentarily lost himself again, becoming a wild thing. The three of them danced a witches' ring around Larry, screeching and tearing at their hair. The other monsters were gone.

The Spook Man leaned closer, his face becoming the shifting meadow of monstrous shapes. "So, little ones," he said, "are you ready to become my tiny son, my baby daughter? Do you want to see how much you really love monsters?"

They formed a wider circle, and fairy lights, wisps of pale bright shooting stars, twirled round with them.

The terror burst out of Larry.

"I don't want to be here!" he screamed, "I never meant any of it, never believed any of it! I don't like spiders and toads and snakes—I'm scared of mice! I built monster models, but I built model cars and ships and planes too. I read *Creepy* and *Strange* and *Ghoul* and *Monster* comics but I also read *Archie* and *Superman*. I snuck out to the movies to see Westerns and funny movies, instead of always watching the Wolfman. I threw out the model guillotine you made me build; I like to collect coins and baseball cards and stamps." He was crying now. "I don't even like the nighttime—I'm afraid of the dark!"

The wild dance stopped. Chubby stepped over with Larry, hung his head.

"Me," he muttered, "too."

Brenda and Harry stood, unmoved. There was a wild ruby gleam in their eyes; their faces seemed more elongated, their ears sharper edged.

"We want to go home!" Chubby and Larry begged.

A door opened in the darkness.

It was a rectangle cut out of nothing, leading to the outside night. There was the baseball field, there the chainlink fence they had climbed, a few bare trees all bathed in velvet moonlight.

Larry and Chubby ran through the door.

All around Brenda and Harry there was a booming laugh.

The Spook Man appeared.

His face was less indistinct now, yet still indescribable. He seemed less sinister, more of normal height and painted in daytime colors.

"Two is more than I ever hope for," he said almost gently. He made a cape motion at the two fleeing figures outside, now climbing like quick monkeys over the fence and away. "They won't be

scared for long. In time it will be almost a pleasant memory for them, a visit to a funhouse."

He turned that elusive face on Brenda and Harry.

"Which is what this is—a funhouse—if you've the right stomach for it." His voice became both echoes and hushed. "Town to town, and hardly ever more than one. Many times none at all." His eyes, piercing, hooded, seemed to be searching for something in their faces, a beacon. "They really don't know me, all the little people in these little towns. They're afraid of me and my little family. But they don't know."

He leaned down over them, a midnight hawk looming over its brood or prey. "Little red and little black," he continued, looking from Brenda to Harry. "Are you ready to join my family? You saw them, all the goblins and fiends and ghosts and demons there are. Once all of them looked just like you, little pink or yellow or ebony people with creature model kits and monster magazines. But something breathed inside them, behind the ghoul costumes and playthings, something locked in the crypts of their human bodies and straining to get out. They loved monsters so much they wanted to be monsters. I gave them the chance. I called them—never took them, only called—away from their creature features and werewolf masks and horror novels, and gave them the chance to join their real family. The one that would make their lives complete. Only the true ones stay, of course. Here they breathe with their real lungs and fly with their real wings, cocooning into the beautiful little horrors they want to be."

He leaned even closer, his face becoming the shifting meadow of monstrous shapes, a nightmare triptych mirroring the life he offered. "So, little ones," he said, his voice echoing all around them as his cape flowed out to encircle, hold them fast to his world, "are you ready to become my tiny son, my baby daughter? Do you want to see how much you really love monsters?"

"No!"


Harry pushed out at the cape, ducking under its strong black wings and out through the doorway. Soon his feet made the chainlink fence jangle as his sneakers carried him up, over, and gone.

The Spook Man laughed softly. "Hardly ever more than one," he said, half to himself.

He turned slowly back to Brenda.

"And you, little Crimson, have you made up your mind?"

Brenda made no answer.

The Spook Man laughed a booming laugh then, and the doorway to the world zipped shut, and the brothers and sisters of the night came from their caskets and damp niches and dusty tombs to meet their new sibling, the creature of teeth and claws and wild red eyes that danced before them. 

THE CIRCLE

by Lewis Shiner

IT WAS THE PERFECT STORY FOR HALLOWEEN—AND LET THE READER BEWARE!

For six years they'd been meeting on Halloween night here at Walter's cabin, and reading ghost stories to each other. Some of the faces varied from year to year, but Lesley had never missed one of the readings.

She'd come alone this year, and as she parked her Datsun at the edge of the graveled road she couldn't help but think of Rob. She'd brought him to the reading the year before, and that night they'd slept together for the first time. It had been nearly two months now since she'd heard from him, and the thought of him left her wavering between guilt and sadness.

Her shoes crunched on pine needles as she dodged the water droplets dripping from the trees overhead. The night was colder than she had expected, the chill seeping quickly through her light jacket.

She hopped onto the porch of the cabin and rapped on the door. Walter's wife, Susan, answered it. "Come in," she said. "You're the first one."

"It's cold out there," Lesley said.

"Isn't it? Tea's ready. Sit down and I'll bring you a cup."

Lesley had barely settled by the fireplace when the others began to trickle in. Some of them had books, others had manuscripts, most of them also had wine or beer. All of them wrote, several of them professionally, and about half the stories each year had been written for the occasion.

Lesley hadn't felt up to writing one herself this year. In fact she hadn't felt up to much of anything since she and Rob had broken up. His bitterness had hurt her badly, and she was hoping that something would happen tonight to pull her back out of herself.

She hoped it would be the way it used to, when the stories had been chilling and the nights had been damp and eerie, and they'd gotten themselves so scared sometimes that they hadn't gone home until daylight.

They'd been younger, then, of course. Now that they were all closing in on thirty they seemed to be more afraid of election results and property taxes than they were of vampires and werewolves.

About nine-thirty Walter stood up and ceremonially lighted the candelabra over the fireplace. The other lamps were turned off, and Walter stood for a moment in the flickering candlelight. He looked a bit like an accountant in his sweater and slacks, with his horn-rimmed glasses and his neatly trimmed mustache.

"Well," he said, clearing his throat. "I think we're all here. Before we get started, we've got something unusual I wanted to tell you about. I got this in the mail last week." He held up a large Manila envelope. "It's from Rob Tranchin, in Mexico."

Lesley felt a pang again. "Did he ..." she blurted out. "Did he say how he is?"

She felt all the eyes in the room turning on her. The others had never liked Rob all that well, had only put up with him for her sake. While all of them dabbled in the occult, Rob was the only one who had ever taken it seriously, and on more than one occasion he'd had shouted arguments with some of them on the subject.

"I, uh, can't really tell," Walter said. "There was a note inside, but it didn't say much. Just said that he'd written a story for us and that he wanted somebody to read it at tonight's, uh, gathering. It's not very long, I took a quick glance at it, so if nobody minds I'll just draw a card for Rob and one of us can read it when that turn comes around."

Behind Lesley, Brian muttered, "I hope it's not some more of that occult shit of his," but there was no formal objection.

Walter took the ace through eight from a deck of cards and shuffled them, then let each of the others draw for a turn. Brian had the ace and read "Heavy Set" by Bradbury. Walter followed with a new story that he'd just sold, another Halloween



Illustration by Peter Kuper

story, and the chill seemed to creep in through the windows. Lesley read a piece from Beaumont and even gave herself shudders.

Then Susan took a turn, her straight blonde hair and pale skin looking cold and waxen in the candles' flicker. Everyone shifted nervously as she finished, and Lesley thought happily that it was really happening again. We've done it, she thought. We've gotten ourselves so worked up that we're ready to believe anything.

"It's Rob's turn," Walter said quietly. "Anyone want to do the honors?"

When no one else spoke up, Lesley said, "I will."

I'm still carrying him, she thought as she took the envelope from Walter. Without wanting to, she finished the thought: someone has to. Poor childish Rob, with his tantrums and his grandiose dreams. How long would he keep haunting them?

She took the manuscript out of the envelope. It was handwritten on some kind of ragged paper that looked like parchment. She recognized the scrawled printing, despite the peculiar brownish ink he'd used.

She glanced at her watch, then went back to the manuscript. "It's called 'The Circle,'" she said.

She began to read.

"For six years they'd been meeting on Halloween night, here at the cabin by the lake, and reading ghost stories to each other."

Lesley looked up. Something about the story was making her nervous, and she could see that same unease on the shadowy faces around her.

"Some of the faces varied from year to year, but a central group remained the same. They had a lot in common—they played their games with each other, went to movies together, and sometimes they went to bed with each other."

Lesley felt a blush starting up her neck. She

THE CIRCLE



might have known he would do something like this to embarrass her. He'd been so jealous of the few stories she'd sold, and when she'd tried to offer him some advice he'd blown up. That had been the first quarrel, and he'd come back to it again and again, more bitter each time, until finally he'd left for Mexico.

Well, I'm the one reading this thing, she thought. If it gets any more personal, I'll just stop.

"Together," she read, "they'd decided that the supernatural was fit material for stories on Halloween, and not much else. Thus they, in their infinite wisdom, were not prepared for what happened to them that Halloween night.

"The leader of the circle got a story in the mail that week. It was written by someone he had known, but never really considered a friend. Because of his beliefs, he didn't recognize the power that lay in the pages and in the ink that the story was written on. And so he accepted the challenge to read the story aloud that Halloween.

"They met at the cabin and read their stories, and then they began to read the story by the man who was not with them anymore. And as soon as they began to read it, a heavy mist settled down around the cabin.

"It was like a fog, but so thick you could almost feel it squeeze between your fingers. It carried the salt smell of an ocean that shouldn't have been there, and everywhere it touched, the world ceased to exist."

Lesley's mouth had gone dry. She was leaning forward to pick up her teacup when she saw the window.

"Oh my God . . ." she whispered.

Beyond the window was a solid mass of white.

They all stared at the fog outside the window. Guy and his new girl friend Dana had been sitting under the window, and they'd moved into the center of the room. "What is it?" Dana asked. Her voice had a tremor in it that made Lesley even more frightened than before.

"It's called fog," Brian sneered. "Haven't you ever seen fog before?" He started for the door. "Look, I'll show it to you."

"Don't—" Lesley started, but her throat caught before she could finish the sentence.

The candlelight glinted off Brian's moist lips and oily hair. "What's the matter with you guys? What are you afraid of?"

He jerked the door open.

The fog lay outside like a wall of cotton wool. The edge of it, where the door had been, was as smooth as if it had been cut with a razor. Not even the thinnest wisp tried to reach through the doorway.

"See?" Brian said, sticking his arm into it. "Fog." Lesley saw his nose wrinkle, and then she

smelled it herself. It was a salty, low-tide odor like dead fish.

"Yuck," Brian said. He took a step toward the porch of the cabin, lost his balance, and caught himself by gripping the molding on either side of the door. "What the hell—?"

He extended one leg as far as it would go, then lay down and reached out into the fog. "There's nothing there."

"I don't like this," Susan said, but no one was listening to her.

"No porch," Brian said, "no ground, nothing." Almost imperceptibly they all began to move closer to the fireplace.

"Close the door," Walter said calmly, and Brian did as he was told. "Lesley, what's the next line of the story?"

"With the fog came the sound of the wind. It howled and it screamed, but the air never moved and the fog lay heavy over the cabin."

The noise began.

It started as a low whistle, then built into a moaning, shrieking crescendo. It sounded less like a wind than a chorus of human voices, frightened and tortured out of their minds.

"Stop it!" Susan screamed. "Stop it, please make it stop!" Walter put his arms around her and held her head to his chest. She began to sob quietly.

They were now a circle in fact, a tight circle on the floor in front of the fireplace, knees touching, eyes searching each other's faces for some sign of understanding.

"What is it?" Dana cried. She was nearly shouting in order to be heard. "Where's it coming from?"

Lesley and Walter looked at each other, then Lesley's gaze dropped to the floor.

"It's that story, isn't it?" Dana said, her voice so high it was starting to crack. "Isn't it?"

"It must be," Walter said. His voice was so low that Lesley could barely hear it over the howling outside. "Rob must have found something in Mexico. A way to get back at us."

"This isn't happening," Brian said. "It's not. It can't be."

"It is," Walter said, raising his voice over the wind. "Pretending it isn't real is not going to help." Susan whimpered, and he held her tighter to his chest. "Look, we've all read stories like this. Some of us have written them. We all get irritated when people refuse to accept what's happening to them. How long is it going to take for us to admit what's happening here?"

"All right," Brian said. "It's real. What do we do?"

Lesley said, "The paper and ink. Rob said they were special. In the story."

"Why don't we just burn the damned thing?" Brian said, "We should have done that in the first place." As if in answer, the wind roared up to a deafening volume.

"No," said Walter. He waited until the noise subsided again and added, "What if we burn it and trap ourselves here? If only we knew how it ends."

"That's easy enough," Brian said. He reached across and took the papers from Lesley's unresisting fingers.

"No!" Walter shouted, lunging at him, but Brian had already flipped over to the last page.

"We all die," he said, handing the story back to Lesley. "Not very well written, but pretty gruesome." His levity failed completely. The wind was so loud it seemed to Lesley that the walls should have been shaken to pieces.

"Ideas?" Walter said. "Anybody?"

"I say burn it," Brian said again. "What can happen?"

"Rewrite it," Lesley said.

"What?" Walter asked. Lesley realized that the awful noise had swallowed her words.

"Rewrite it!" she repeated. "Change the ending!"

"I like it," Walter said. "Guy?"

He shrugged. "Worth a try. Anybody got a pen?"

"No," Lesley said. "I don't think that'll work."

"Why not?"

"I think," she said, "it's written in blood."

She knew it was up to her. It was like belling the cat—her idea, her responsibility. Before any of the others could stop her, she got a safety pin out of her purse and jabbed it into the index finger of her left hand.

She rolled the point of the pin in the droplet of blood, then tried to draw an X across the bottom of the page she'd been reading from. The point of the pin just wouldn't hold enough. Finally she just wiped her finger across it, and then did the same thing on the last two pages.

"Now," she said. "What do I write?"

It started as a low whistle, then built into a moaning, shrieking crescendo, less like a wind than a chorus of human voices, frightened and tortured out of their minds.

They all sat and looked at each other while the ghost wind shrieked at them.

"How about, 'Everything returned to normal,'" Guy said.

"What's normal?" Brian asked.

"He's got a point," Walter admitted. "We may need to be more specific."

"Not too specific," Lesley said. "I've only got, so much blood."

No one laughed.

"Okay," Walter said. "Does anybody know what time Lesley started reading?"

"I checked," Lesley said. "It was eleven-eighteen."

"All right. How about, 'Everything returned to the way it had been at eleven-eighteen that night?'"

There were nods all around. "Go for it," Guy said.

This time Lesley had to use the pin. It was slow going, but she finally got the words scrawled across the bottom of the page.

The wind continued to scream.

"Read it," Walter said.

Lesley's hands were shaking. Come on, she told herself, you didn't lose that much blood. But she knew it wasn't that. What if she read it and it didn't work? She couldn't stand that horrible, shrill noise much longer.

From the back of her mind a grim thought began to nag at her. What were the gruesome things the story said happened to them?

Let it work, she prayed. Let everything be the way it had been. Just exactly the way it had been.

"'Everything,'" she read, her shaking voice barely topping the roar of the wind, "'returned to the way it had been at eleven-eighteen that night.'"

It was quiet.

The night was clear and cold, and water dripped from the trees to the layer of pine needles on the ground.

Lesley looked at her watch. It was 11:18.

"It's called 'The Circle,'" she said.

She began to read. **W**



Illustration by Harry Pincus

HALLOWEEN GIRL

by Robert Grant

IT WAS THE SEASON, THE HOLIDAY, THE NIGHT OF NIGHTS.
AND COME WHAT MAY, HE WAS GOING TO SPEND IT WITH *HER*.

"The Frankenstein Monster?"
"Too common."
"Dracula?"
"Doesn't look monsterish enough."
"The Phantom of the Opera?"
"Well . . ."
"Werewolf."
"Now you're talking!"

It was decided, then. Tommy would be a werewolf, a furred and fanged slinker in the darkness, claws glistening in the full moon's light. Marcie had already settled on being a mummy.

They were sprawled on the back porch of Marcie's house, their schoolbooks dumped to one side, their eyes riveted to the magazine before them: *Famous Monsters of Filmland*.

"Well, I'm glad that's settled," said Marcie.
"About time, too. There's not that much time left,

and it's only the most important thing of all."

Tommy waved a lazily buzzing fly away from his blond hair. "Have you finished the skulls yet?"

"Sure. All but the dripping blood. We can paint it on together."

As they talked, as they planned, the great dreadful marvelous day seemed as close as their own breath. So few days, short days getting shorter, racing and rushing by, and the Night loomed close, too close for breathing room. The black and orange celebration, the eve of dancing witches and moaning skulls, of howling things and silently creeping things. The night when darkness took on a shape and walked about, wrapping its melancholy cape about you and bidding you go forth with it for the great party of eternal midnight.

Tommy and Marcie looked forward to it with a fever of longing, more than to Christmas even,

They shared a feeling, a surging need for the fantastic, the ghoulish, the shadows that lurked inside shadows.

because it linked them in a special way. It was the different holiday—not all sparkling lights and radiant smiles, but dark and secretive and strange, gleeful in a grisly way—and they were different, too. Different from all the other kids, not by choice but naturally and irrevocably, in the marrow of their dreams.

The friendship had just happened, as things will when they must. Marcie's family had moved to town a little more than a year ago, and Tommy, who had never thought much about girls one way or another, hadn't paid particular attention to the new auburn-haired pupil with the eyes that wanted to give friendship but always danced away like a deer in a forest.

Then their fourth-grade class had to give oral reports on short stories, and when Tommy's choice was "The Premature Burial" and Marcie's "The Damned Thing," the link was forged. After class he had found himself asking, "You like those kinds of stories?"

And so it had gone. A mutual interest—no, a feeling, a surging need for the fantastic, the ghoulish, the shadows that lurked inside shadows. Heedless of their classmates' teasing ("Look who's in love!"), they seemed always to be together. When a new horror movie came to town, they would be side by side in the candy-scented darkness on Saturday afternoon, and they haunted the fantasy-jammed wonderland of the comic book racks. But their favorite province, their kingdom, was the hushed aisle of the library, where they fearlessly ventured into the dark regions of the grown-up section. For there lurked *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, and their brethren.

When not unearthing what netherworldly treasures their small town had to offer, they would be at their hidden sanctum, behind a ramshackle storage shed in Tommy's backyard. There, in a small shaded spot, invisible to the dull outsiders, they pored over their ghastly booty and poured out their souls, both emptying their own magics, the shared wonderful strangeness that was theirs alone while the rest of the world threw balls, kicked tin cans, and went on its own grey way.

"Boy, they really goofed in that scene where the vampire went out in daylight!"

"No lie!"

And:

"I think 'The Call of Cthulhu' is better because you have to imagine what the monster looks like. It's eerier that way."

"Yeah, but 'The Whisperer in Darkness' has a better ending."

And:

"Boy, we're gonna make a haul this year! Last Halloween my bag was nearly overflowing with candy bars and caramels and bubble gum and licorice and—"

"Licorice, ugh! I always throw mine away."

"Marcie! How could you! Well, this year you can throw it into my sack."

And so it went. Afternoons flew by on batwings, riding a high howling wind of imagination that bore them above the plain white houses and the dismal green classrooms and the endless flat grasslands.

Now the bond had become more intense, more centered as the Night of Nights approached. There were so many things to do, so much making and searching and assembling so that the splendid ceremony of laughing darkness would be right in every detail.

Marcie applied paints and crayons and scissors, conjuring forth superbly horrid creatures that soon glowered at their windows. Tommy gathered wood and cloth and cardboard, which became scarecrow phantoms and witches and demons, unblinking sentries for their front porches.

Together they kept watch on the dime store, where the ritual talismans gradually appeared: masks with malignant leers frozen in plastic; costumes cut from the fabric of night itself; and such atmosphere-completing ornaments as plastic jack o' lanterns and witch-shaped candles.

But most of all, they mingled their dreams of the coming night, pooling fantasies, relishing already how it would be: the shadows rushing past as they made their journey, moving in new horrible forms through the dark that bustled with fellow visitors from the elder domains. Up to each house, up to each porch, up to each door they would fly, demanding their booty, the sacrifice, the offering that alone could spare the household from evil.

They would talk here behind the shed until the sun threatened to quench itself in a last cool blaze that played fiery among the crisping leaves. Then Marcie would sigh, rise, and go.

"See you."

"Yeah, okay."

And after his partner in goblins and yearning had gone, Tommy would sit for a while watching the autumn's golden blood grow cooler and dimmer, playing with their dreams a bit more before going into the house.

One morning Marcie didn't meet Tommy in front of school as always. She wasn't in class for roll call. All day Tommy pondered her absence; she had been fine the previous afternoon. They had planned to inspect pumpkins at the grocery store today.

After school Tommy walked straight to Marcie's house. Her mother answered the door and said Marcie had become sick in the night. She was sorry,

His path wound
from familiar streets
that now looked strange . . .

Was this his town?

In the big timeless night
he could be anywhere,
he could be wandering lost
through nightmare streets
and alleys
that led nowhere.

she said, but he couldn't see her just now. She was sorry, but things were so upset there was no time to say much. She was sorry . . .

On his way home Tommy noticed vaguely, through his numbness, what a nice day it was. The air was surprisingly warm, a vagrant echo of a summer that had gone away somewhere. Yet there was no question that the weather wasn't young anymore. Beyond the trees, beyond the horizon, something chilly and grey lay waiting.

A week passed with Marcie's desk at school empty. Tommy still could not see her. All he knew, all that he could snatch from the half-overheard conversations of his parents and the maddeningly uninformative soothing was that she was not better.

Tommy floated listlessly through the days, trying not to imagine. He sat stonily in class; he roamed to familiar places out of habit, not thinking much of where he was. Mostly he hid behind the storage shed. He wasn't sure from what he was hiding, but it was something beyond his control, something fearsome but perhaps more sad than mean.

He tried not to imagine.

Nine days after Marcie's first absence Tommy came home from school, and his parents quietly asked him to come into the living room and sit down.

He went in ahead of them, a strange immense emptiness opening in him, an emptiness that had to be there because if you let anything come in, if you thought or felt, it would be dangerous. You'd let in something sharp and terrible and final.

But his parents' words, no matter how cushioned, would not be denied entrance. They came in, telling what his heart knew already, and with them came a cold, rolling, growing blackness that was too big, too filling. Its relentless fullness ached and pressed until it spilled in great knifing sobs through which a thought lanced: *I never even got to see her . . .*

After the first spasm of grief, he relieved his parents by his composure, his outward acceptance. In the days that followed Tommy was unusually quiet, but not grim, not depressed. He went to

school, came home, did his homework, loafed about, read and watched television. When a friend asked him over or when his parents proposed an outing, he seemed uninterested, but it was not a morbid turning away into a private misery. He never had been an outgoing boy.

So by the time Halloween arrived, all who had observed him anxiously for signs of prolonged mourning were satisfied that he had adjusted nicely in a very short time.

Tommy didn't consider for a moment not going out that night. If anything, he was determined to go; there was an aspect of duty to it, of remembrance, even of tribute. He expected no fun. The joy, the spectral exaltation so long promised, would not be there. No use to look for it in the ritual, for it had been broken into pieces and swept away into some dark unreachable place. But he had to go.

Alone. His parents suggested making the rounds with some others, but Tommy declined softly. It had to be just him, alone riding the night like a gigantic black cat, the night they should have shared. That joy wouldn't happen now, but to be in the midst of outsiders' laughter, pretending to be one of them, would make it worse.

So into the night he went, a plastic-faced werewolf carrying an empty bag.

Through the dark October maze of leaf-strewn lawns and bleak streets, glowing porches looming up where doors would open and someone would make a polite comment on one's costume and then hold forth a hand from which dimly discerned objects would patter into one's bag. House after house, street after ghostly street, the lamps on the corners adding lunar circles in the sky. All about were noises—laughter just ahead, scurrying footsteps across the street, muffled voices coming and going, elusive firefly voices.

It was close under the mask; Tommy's breath came back to him, and his forehead was damp. He made his way steadily, methodically. Not running, not catching the night, the whole orange and black event from house to house, a slow solitary figure, rapped at the doors almost reticently, gently spoke the three-word incantation and just as gently thanked the tall strangers before returning to the blackness with his ever heavier bag.

His path wound from familiar streets that now looked strange into neighborhoods that were new to him. Anonymous houses with nameless people inside, people with the same faces and voices over and over, each adding to his bounty. Was this his town? In the big timeless night he could be anywhere, he could be wandering lost through nightmare streets and alleys that led nowhere. In his warm monster's cocoon he didn't care, he didn't think, he just continued because . . . because he had to.

At some point Tommy realized that he had

stopped walking. That he was no longer in the midst of houses. That he stood before a stone wall that vanished into the night in both directions. The only sound was a hint of breeze-whispered leaves.

A high iron gate was there, and before Tommy knew quite why he had slipped his grass-blade form through two bars, and now stood alone, awesomely alone, at the edge of a seemingly infinite level expanse of grassy land. There were the occasional shadowy shapes of trees and neatly cut bushes, and there were many stone markers of every size and form.

Knowing where he was, knowing that what had brought him was something deeper and stronger than conscious intent, Tommy walked past the rows of stone objects, his path a web of wan moonlight and tangled shadows.

Suddenly it was there, waiting for him in the muted pearliness, the smaller marker standing forlorn but faithful.

Tommy sat down on the ground, holding the loaded sack in his lap, and removed his mask.

"I went out," he said. "I knew you'd want me to. I'm a werewolf, just like we decided."

He swallowed, fingering the string of the mask. "It was okay, I guess. Lots of kids out. I didn't see anyone we knew. 'Course it's hard to tell when they're all dressed up."

He shifted to a reclining position on his side, laying the bag next to him. Leaves and breezes made dry, distant sounds somewhere.

"I got plenty of stuff. I haven't taken a look at it yet. Mrs. Edwards gave popcorn balls like always."

The surrounding shadows seemed to breathe gently, silently across the void overhead. Tommy grasped for more words, but all that came was an immense yearning. The emptiness, the vast incompleteness that he had held down for so long and so desperately rose up and seized him in its draining downward pull.

"Marcie, it wasn't okay. It was awful. It wasn't fun, it just wasn't anything because you weren't there with me, you were here with the ... with the ..."

Like a lighted candle in a jack o' lantern, something dawned inside him, something that felt like understanding. He thought that he'd gone out into the Halloween night for *her*, danced the witches' dance for her, reaped the grisly October harvest because she couldn't.

But now he knew that it was she who had gone into the night for him. She had led the way into the secret heart of midnight. She was a part of it now, she *was* Halloween in a way he couldn't be with his plastic mask from the dime store.

Finally, now, the tears came. Not mourning tears, but October tears that fell as naturally and with the same necessity as falling leaves. The warm wet drops were lost in a strange wind out of the




night as Tommy laid his sack by the small stone marker.

"Thanks, Marcie," he whispered. Then he turned and went back the way he had come, through the gate and toward the town, his home, his bed.

He awoke to the tentative sunlight of an autumn morning and to a strange smell. Actually it was a combination of two smells—a melancholy one of moist earth, and a happy one of dark, inviting sweetness.

As the sleep left his eyes, he noticed with a dawning smile the three long black objects laid neatly beside his pillow.

"I forgot," he murmured. "I forgot you didn't like licorice." 

The Screenplay

by Joseph Cromarty

ALL THIS TALK ABOUT WEREWOLVES ... COULD JACK BE TRYING TO TELL HIM SOMETHING?

"Jack, are you busy? 'Cause if you are, get yourself unbusy. Ol' Roger's got a money-maker, and I'll be right over with it." He hung up before any reply was possible.

Twenty minutes later he was bursting through Jack's apartment door.

"Don't you ever knock? And did it even remotely occur to you that I might be busy, Rog? For all you know, your wife might be in my bedroom."

Roger dropped his briefcase on the dining table. "Not a chance. She went to visit Sally Reed for the evening. Got a beer?"

"You know where it is. And get one for me while you're at it." Jack lit a cigarette and sat down. "Now what the hell's this all about?"

Roger pulled his head out of the refrigerator. "Big pile of money and a piece of the action for a quick screenplay. And when I say quick, I mean quick." He passed an opened bottle of beer to Jack and sat down. "We've got tonight to put together a treatment and an outline. Then tomorrow, if Wilberts likes it, we have a whole five days to do the finished script."

Beer spurted from the bottle as Jack yanked it from his mouth. "Tonight! Are you kidding?"

"Why? Something wrong with tonight?"

"Uh, no. What gave you that idea?" He wiped the beer off the front of his shirt. "You were saying we have just one night to get an outline together? One lousy night? Am I reading you right?"

"Jack, we can do it. We've had tight schedules before."

"Not this tight."

"Okay, so not this tight. But not this much money either. We get five thousand dollars when we hand in the outline tomorrow. We get even more for the screenplay in five days, and—did I tell you?—a percentage of the gross. Gross, mind you, not net. Now, does that quell your rising resentments?"

Jack hesitated.

"Hey, maybe I was wrong, Jack. Maybe you're not interested. Or maybe you have something on for tonight."

"You're not wrong, Rog. I'm interested. It's just that, well, one night? It's already—" he glanced at his watch "—seven forty-five."

Roger took a swallow of beer. "Not to worry. We can do it. Trust me. And, who knows, maybe we'll pick up our first Oscar."

"Do you know what 'fat chance' means?"

"Well, old fiend," Roger said, baring his teeth, "let's get to it. While it may not be Oscar material, it is a living. And since we both can use the money—I know I can; Janet's been hinting for a trip back East for months now—let's get to it."

Jack went to his desk, returning with paper and a typewriter. He set them down on the dining table. "Okay, bright boy, what's your great idea?"

Roger shrugged his shoulders. "I don't have any."

"Terrific!" Jack pushed himself away from the typewriter.

"As I said before, not to worry." Roger touched his forehead. "Just because you see the Mark of Zero on my forehead, doesn't mean there's nothing inside. We kick it around—not my head, mind you—and out may spring a beautiful idea, another *Gone With the Wind*. Hell, isn't that how *Killer on the Turnpike* came about?"

"Yeah. Okay." Jack fed paper into the typewriter. "Let's go with the flow. What's hot?"

"SF. *Alien*, *Star Wars*, *The Empire*. All hot properties. So, do we go with a science fiction script?"

"Great idea."

"Except," said Roger. "Except, as usual, the two hotshots of the flick biz are once again stuck with a low budget. And the way things have been going in the special effects department, that's where the heavy money gets spent. So okay, science fiction is out. What are your thoughts?"

"Well, it's gotta be a quickie, something that can be done on the cheap, like the old Republic western serials. Damn, when will we ever get to work on a picture with some money in it?"

"Right after this one, Jack. That's the way we have to look at it. Okay, maybe you've got some-



Illustration by Yvonne Buchanan

thing there. How about a western?"

Jack looked out the window and stole a quick look at his watch.

"Don't worry about the time. We've got all night, heh, heh, heh." Roger got up. "How about some fortification? Another beer?"

"No thanks."

"Well, if you don't mind, I will." Roger carried the empties to the kitchen, watching Jack over his shoulder. Jack again looked out the window and checked his watch.

"Well, what do you think? A western?"

"Everything's been done in westerns. Didn't Frank Gruber say there were only seven basic western plots?"

"Right, but there sure as hell have been more than seven western movies, Jack." Roger sat and poured beer down his throat.

"Yeah, I know, but even *The Lone Ranger* died

at the box office, and I figured that was one movie that couldn't miss."

"You never know. All right, how about a comedy? There haven't been many of those this year."

"True, Rog, but we've never written a comedy. What makes you think this is the time to start, with only one night to get it down on paper?"

"Well, there's a first time for everything." Suddenly he leaped up. "I've got it! A horror show. They always do well, especially at the drive-ins. What do you think?"

Jack looked up from the typewriter. "You mean like *Friday the 13th*, *Terror Train*, that sort of thing?"

"Yeah, but we could do a good one, something like *Halloween*. Just because it's cheaply done doesn't mean it has to be lousy."

Roger jumped onto the chair. "Wait. I have a better idea. Are you ready for this?"



Jack grabbed the edge of the table with both hands, tightened his jaw muscles, and said, "Okay, coach, I'm ready. Do your worst."

"Aha, but this isn't my worst. Fact is, it may be my best."

"I'm still ready."

Roger paused a moment for effect and said, "Werewolves."

"What?"

Roger jumped off the chair, ran behind it, hunched himself over the back of it, bared his teeth, and said again, "Werewolves."

Jack swallowed. "No, Roger," he said.

"And why so great a no? It's terrific, Jack. The werewolf legend has always been popular. We can't miss. People have been going to werewolf movies since Lon Chaney first put the bite on them."

There was a slight sheen of sweat on Jack's face. "No. No, Roger, not a werewolf movie." He looked out the window. His hands seemed to unconsciously start scratching each other.

Roger noticed, but ignored it, so caught up was he in his idea. Then he laughed. "I just had a wild thought. Something you said earlier." He leaned on the table. "How do you kill a werewolf, Jack?"

Jack was rubbing his thighs. "What? I don't know."

"With a silver bullet, right? That's how old Larry Talbot always got it, a silver bullet. So in all the werewolf movies, the hero has to find an old silver candlestick, melt it down, make a silver bullet, and shoot the nasty old werewolf. But who do you know that *always* has a silver bullet?"

"I, uh, I don't know what you're talking about." Jack was sweating profusely now, and his eyes darted from the window to his watch.

"I can see the marquee now." Roger swept his hands in an arc in front of him. *The Wolf Man Meets the Lone Ranger*. How about it?" He leaned on the back of the chair and looked directly at Jack, smiling.

"It's not funny, Roger, not funny at all. You laugh at the werewolf. Big joke. But the werewolf is a piteous creature, deserving sympathy, not scorn. You said you've seen all the movies. Okay, have you ever seen a werewolf who enjoyed being a werewolf?"

Do you think werewolves like tearing their friends apart, ripping their limbs off?" Jack got up and paced to the window. He looked up and kicked off his shoes. Then he turned to his friend and began unbuttoning his shirt.

"Remember 'old Larry Talbot' tying himself to his bed on the night of the full moon, or asking to be locked up in the town jail in an effort to keep himself from committing some vile act? Remember?"

Behind Jack, Roger could see the full moon seeking its freedom from the clouds. He picked up his briefcase. "Uh, look, Jack, this isn't working out too well tonight. Hey, tell you what. Why don't we work on some ideas individually? We can get together early in the morning and pick the best one." He started toward the door. "Yeah, that's probably the best way. I'll call you first thing in the morning."

Before Jack could answer him, Roger was gone.

Jack walked to the table and sat. He covered his sweaty face with his hands.

In another minute, the door Roger had left by opened, and a very lovely young lady walked in.

"Hi," she said.

Jack looked up. He laughed.

"What's so funny?" she asked.

"Lock the door and I'll tell you."

She locked the door and went over to him. "You're all sweaty," she said when she had kissed him.

He stood and took her in his arms. "You know, Janet, I think I may be a better actor than playwright. You have no idea how hard I had to work to get rid of your husband before you got here."

He laughed all the way to the bedroom. 12



SOMETHING WAS SPOOKING
THE NIGHT WATCHMEN— AND IT
WASN'T ROBBERS. IT WAS JUST ...

THE SMELL OF CHERRIES

BY JEFFREY GODDIN

Taylor had never been in the army. Too young for Korea, he'd pulled a high number during the Vietnamese shindig. But he liked guns, and he liked excitement of the low-key variety. This might explain why he still found security work mildly interesting, even though he'd almost had his car shot up on an industrial espionage job, and had had to wrestle a coked-out robber to the floor on a pawnshop beat.

The problem with Taylor was, he was a romantic, and more or less incapable of taking orders from anyone on an eight-hour basis. This was probably the reason that what he'd regarded as merely a stopgap job on the way to better things was heading into its second year.

Now, near midnight, driving down a narrow river road on the Indianan side of the Ohio across from Louisville, he was humming softly to himself. He looked forward to a night of sipping spiced coffee and watching the perimeter of a small trucking company for intruders.

This was a holiday job. Happy Thanksgiving. He'd never done the Coleman trucking shift before. All he knew about Coleman was that they had trouble keeping guards on it. The guards got spooked, for some reason. This, too, made the shift mildly attractive.

The lights of Jeffersonville were fading in the distance. Night closed in around the inverted cones of his headlights. Skeletal November trees lined the road, with now and again a car parked by the roadside, interior lights on, kids smoking dope or drinking with the radio throbbing.

Nice, calm, dark road. But Taylor had a slight uneasiness this night, a new feeling, as if in some way he were going into battle. And a part of him liked the feeling.

He passed a stretch of river, distant lights, then the road ran back inland. Now on the left a series of large buildings came up, set well away from the road. A few, but only a few, of the buildings showed light.

Taylor remembered that Coleman's lay along the edge of a large World War II military base, now mostly empty barracks space, a seldom-used proving ground with a skeleton administrative staff.

Almost there. He saw the red eyes of the reflectors marking the entrance to the wide staging lot, a dozen or so trailers ranged around the perimeter waiting for drivers. At the rear of the lot he recognized the El Camino of the day guard.

On a whim, he killed his lights. He accelerated a little, then let the car coast up beside the El Camino, which was facing to the rear.

It was one of those minor precognitions, like when he'd known that the next guy to walk into the pawnshop was the one he'd have to deal with. He'd also known in some strange fashion that the duty guard in the El Camino would be sleeping, and he was right.

The driver's head was thrown back, a cap pulled across his eyes. Taylor rolled down his window, smelled the cool country air, a scent of dead leaves and earth. He was tempted to blow his horn to wake the shift cop, but he didn't.

Funny, the man was talking to himself in his sleep. In the half-light, half-shadow of the interior, his face was contorted. He was talking quickly, then suddenly he screamed.

The man's eyes shot open. Immediately he saw Taylor, and his hand was halfway to the gun on the seat when he recognized him.

"Snuck up on me, you bastard!"

"Any kid could have. It's a wonder you still have tires. Must have been some dream you were having!"

Brewster laughed. "Hope I don't have any more like it. Dreamed I was sitting right here in my Hillbilly Cadillac and some fucking monsters were creeping up on me out of the woods over there."

Inadvertently, Taylor looked over to the darkly wooded perimeter. A full moon made the nearer trees stand out starkly, dark shadows beneath. He could almost see things moving in there.

"Course, *you're* the one they're waitin' for."

Taylor shook his head. "Your sense of humor hasn't improved since the G.E. job, leaving that dead cat by the first keystop ..."

"Hey, it gets better." Brewster consulted his watch. "Shit, past midnight, gotta haul, my momma's waitin'."

"One thing," said Taylor, reaching for the



THE SMELL OF CHERRIES

walkie-talkie that Brewster handed him through the window, "I hear you have trouble keeping people on this shift, why?"

"Tales gettin' to ya? Hell if I know. As far as action goes, don't think anybody ever tried to hit this place. Nice and quiet and dead dull, out in the sticks like this. Maybe that's it. City boys get lonesome. See ya."

Brewster slammed the Camino into low, shot gravel across the lot as he took off. Taylor watched the red tail lights wink at the turn and disappear up the road toward Jeffersonville.

The beginning of a twelve-hour shift. A good time, as far as Taylor was concerned. He climbed out of the car, stretched, pulled out his shotgun, and walked across the loose gravel to the perimeter at the back of the lot.

To the left, the woods; to his rear, the road. Ahead was an empty field of autumn weeds, with a few desultory crickets chiming under the full moon and, very far away it seemed, the nearest of the abandoned barracks.

The night was quiet, so still. He took a deep breath of cool air, turned around.

He could see his old Chevy quite clearly in the moonlight. Someone was standing beside it.

Taylor's nerves froze. He was an experienced guard. He had a twelve-gauge automatic shotgun with deer slugs under his arm. Yet there was something about the tall, apparently male figure beside his car that made him dizzy with fear. And there was only one thing to do about it.

He began to walk slowly back across the lot, the shotgun in his hands. It seemed to take a very long time. With each step, the figure was slightly clearer. It was a man, bareheaded, wearing a loose overcoat, facing away from Taylor, peering into the car.

Taylor suddenly remembered that, like an idiot, he'd left the keys in the ignition. All this dude had to do was climb in and drive away. He began to run, holding the shotgun across his chest.

He was quite close. The man must hear him, but he didn't move. Fifteen, ten yards. Taylor slowed to a walk, brought the gun up in one hand, his flashlight in the other.

"You, don't move!" he yelled.

The figure didn't move. Five yards, four, three. He could see the fellow clearly now, hands in his pockets, shoulders hunched into the old khaki raincoat, a bald spot on the top of his head.

"Take your hands out of your pockets, real slow, and turn around."

Slowly the figure took his hands out of his pockets. The bare fingers that protruded from the ends of the overcoat seemed very slender, very pale.

It turned around, and Taylor shone his

flashlight in its face.

He didn't scream, but he wanted to.

There was no face.

Taylor stood frozen, motionless.

The man was gone. There was only a faint sweetish smell in the air.

"Base calling 2101. Base calling 2101."

Taylor jerked open the door and collapsed in the front seat. He fumbled at the walkie-talkie.

"2101 receiving."

"Everything 10-2 down on the ranch?"

"Got a spook here, otherwise 10-2."

"Copy?"

"Spook. S-P-O-O-K. But harmless. Everything 10-2."

"Lay off the funny cigarettes, 2101."

But the switchboard girl giggled.

"10-4. 2101 over and out."

Taylor put down the walkie-talkie. What the hell had he seen? He'd never seen anything like it before, even when he'd dropped acid a few times. Was his psyche gunning for him? He put the thought out of his mind.

It was a nice night. He turned on the radio low, and had a first sip of the sweet, scalding coffee. The moon was just touching the tops of the slender black trees, the paired lights of a car passed in the distance. *It would be a good night, now that his unconscious had had its little fling.*

Taylor's nerves froze.
He was an experienced guard.
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Taylor had a game he played with himself on long security shifts. He'd either mentally write the novel he'd promised himself he owed the world one day, or he'd reminisce about old girl friends.

The girl friends generally came a bit more toward the early morning hours. He decided to pick up on the novel.

The last time, he'd had his protagonist traveling across Ohio in a drunken haze. Now he would stop in a small Pennsylvania town, and meet a lonely woman who ran a rooming house. She would be in her early thirties, pale, divorced, and pretty. She would invite him to dinner one night. Outside the

rain would be falling softly. Inside the candlelight danced across her face, softening its lines . . .

Taylor heard a sound.

His preconscious heard the sound and registered it before his conscious mind. His conscious mind didn't want anything to do with it.

Distant, but not too distant, the sound of a woman crying in pain.

He scanned the lot. The moon rode high, the small floods illuminating the terminal building. The sound seemed to be coming from the far right rear of the perimeter, where a few trailers were parked.

This is weird, but it is not as weird as it seems.

Taylor climbed out of the car, taking shotgun and flashlight. He walked quickly across the lot, the sound of his boots crunching gravel loud in the night.

It came again, the cry, louder, a catch of horrible pain in the woman's voice. Taylor began to run.

It was coming from directly behind the line of four trailers. Instead of running between them into the darkness, he slowed and went around them to the left.

The moonlight was bright. It seemed as if that icy white moon were chilling the air. There were narrow black shadows behind the trailers, but the cries hadn't come from there. Taylor paused to catch his breath.

The cry came again, piercing, agonized. A young woman's voice. It sounded as if she were dying, horribly.

Beyond the edge of the lot there was a stand of dry cattails, perhaps ten yards deep, indicating swampy ground. Taylor walked cautiously toward them. A scent hit his nose, not of the swamp: a faint, sweetish scent.

He almost did not go on, for it was the same scent that he'd smelled when he saw the man by his car.

But that was insane. The cry had subsided to a horrible gasping sob. Carefully placing his feet in the soggy ground, Taylor flipped on his flashlight and pressed through the cattails.

There was a small clearing in the center of the cattails. Here he saw a pool of water a few yards across, and lying half in the greenish pool was . . .

The corpse of a young woman. A pale, mottled, decayed thing whose long fair hair was entangled in the weeds, and whose hands still clutched something long and dull and metal that it had plunged into its chest.

Taylor shuddered, the light shaking in his hands, the odd, sweet smell very strong.

This thing could have made no sound.

Even as he watched, it slowly straightened, and the eyes rolled open and flashed moonlight into his.

Taylor heard his own scream. The shotgun roared in his hand, and he fell back, stumbled to his feet, crashed through the cattails back to the parking lot, wiping frantically at bits of moist . . . something . . . that the blast had scattered across his face and clothes.

He stood in the open, panting, looked back, terrified that the thing would follow. The smoke of the shotgun blast hung low over the little patch of cattails. There was no sound. He forced himself to turn and walk slowly back to the car.

The walkie-talkie was calling. Taylor answered, grateful for the human voice.

"See any more spooks, 2101?"

Silence.

"2101, copy?"

"No, Base, no more spooks. Everything 10-2."

"You kinda sound like one, 2101. Base out."

"10-4, 2101 out."

Taylor turned his car so that he faced the terminal, and had the swamp to his left, the entrance to his right. His back was to the woods, but at the moment he was not worried about anything that might come out of the woods.

His hands were shaking. He poured himself half a cup of coffee and filled it with bourbon from the pint he kept under the seat. For emergencies. This was an emergency.

The bourbon felt good going down. Slowly he began to relax.

He tried to consider the . . . things . . . he'd seen in a calm, rational manner. There were really only three alternatives: the most likely was that someone was playing tricks on him. Elaborate tricks, to be sure, but it was possible.

The second possibility was that his own mind was playing tricks on him. But why now? Tonight? Why not at the LSD parties of the old days, when he'd sat cool, calm, and collected while everybody else was freaking their heads off? No, that was out. He was *not* an unstable person.

The third alternative was that there were spooks out there. No, and no, and no. Taylor was a romantic, but he did not believe in spooks in any way, shape, or form.

He raised the doctored coffee to his lips, savoring the old bourbon. Suddenly it came to him. It was so simple!

They'd had trouble keeping guards out here before. A few had told crazy stories, but management would have put that down to boozing on the job.

Someone was going to a lot of trouble to scare the guards off. He knew there were "hot loads"—booze or electronics—here occasionally. It was one thing to tackle an armed guard, but if you could just scare him off with some Dark Shadows routine, the rest would be a piece of cake!

THE SMELL OF CHERRIES

Tricky. Well, he'd show them a trick or two! Taylor finished the coffee and decided to take another walk back to the perimeter.

Bright light filled the car. Someone was turning in off the river road.

The big Ford passed him, heading for the side door of the terminal. Taylor was halfway across the lot when a tall man in a suede jacket and western hat climbed out.

"Don't shoot," he said, "I gotta piss like a racehorse."

"Sorry, this place is—"

"It's okay. My name's Stahl, day dispatch here. Yours is Taylor, right?"

He produced a ring of keys from his pocket and proceeded to open the door.

"Why don't you come in for a minute? Just don't drop that cannon. Browning auto, isn't it? Good deer gun, close up."

Taylor followed the big man into a narrow panelled room with a half-window like a doctor's office, where truckers picked up their lading bills and logged in. Stahl took off his jacket and put a tin pot on an old two-burner hotplate for coffee, then plugged in the large electric heater by the desk.

Taylor sat close to the heater. It felt good. He hadn't realized he was shivering.

Stahl disappeared behind a door marked *Private* and returned a few minutes later, zipping up his trousers. In the light of a couple of bare bulbs, he looked older. Taylor placed his age at about sixty, a healthy sixty.

"So you're the new replacement guard," said Stahl, half to himself.

"Nope, I've got a regular beat over across the river, pawnshops and trucking, but they needed someone for the holidays."

Stahl shifted a pile of papers on his desk, spooned instant coffee into a couple of cups, poured the steaming water, and handed one to Taylor.

"Well, hope you enjoy yourself out here. They kind of have a hard time keeping guards here."

Taylor had a brief suspicion that Stahl might know something about the "tricks" someone was playing. But looking into the brown, lined face, he thought not.

"Spooks, probably," said Taylor. "This is kind of a weird spot, what with the old barracks and all. Wouldn't be surprised if somebody might try a few tricks to scare a guard off."

Stahl's eyes narrowed, his nose twitching above his close-trimmed gray moustache, as if he might sneeze.

"You seen something?"

Taylor smiled, "Thought I *did* see somebody around earlier, but it turned out I was wrong."

Stahl sipped his coffee, watching Taylor closely.

"You haven't heard the history of this place, have you?"

"Only that it was once part of the military base."

Stahl smiled almost mischievously.

"Well, there's a bit more to it than that. This was a real active base, on around World War II. Had two, three thousand men in training at a time. They'd work 'em up, outfit 'em, and send 'em on down to Fort Knot, Kentucky, to fly out for parts unknown."

"I've lived around the Valley all my life. Soldiers used to come into town on weekends, raise holy hell. But we liked 'em."

Stahl paused, eyes distant.

"But part of the history of this place is a little darker. Between World War II and Korea, they brought in some scientists, chemists. Top secret, hush-hush kind of thing. We'd see 'em around town sometimes, but they were a pretty close-mouthed bunch, wouldn't say what they were up to."

"They had a little factory, looked like, maybe fifty people workin' there, sat right where this terminal is now, but nobody, I mean nobody, knew what they were makin' in there. Most of us in town thought they were makin' some kind of new rocket, missile, somesuch."

"Well, one morning early, County Sheriff, old Thompson, has been out checkin' on a burglary. He's driving by here, and somebody almost walks in front of his car. He yells at the guy, thinks he's some damned drunk. Then he takes a good look at him, the blood on his clothes."

"He looks over at the factory, and sees maybe a dozen people, some of 'em lying on the ground, some of 'em just stumbling around, blood all over 'em. And he smells a smell, a funny sweet smell, real strong, that kind of makes him dizzy just to breathe it."

"Thompson's no fool. He doesn't even get out of the car. He heads down the road, burns rubber up to the guard post, and has 'em wake up the Adjutant."

"The Adjutant turns a dead shade of pale when he hears the Sheriff's story, but tells him not to worry, that they're keeping a few mental patients down by the factory, and that he'll handle it."

"Well, I've known Thompson a long time. He's like me, he can smell something fishy about a mile off. He goes back to town, wakes up his deputies, calls up the National Guard, and has a small army together when he heads back."

"By this time there's almost no way of keeping it under wraps. The Adjutant, looking like he just wants to be somewhere else, drafts Thompson's men and the Guard to help clean up the mess."

"That factory," Stahl paused, "was makin' nerve gas."

"Jeeze!"

"Yeah, Jesus and Mary, too. They had a whole batch set up to ship off God knows where, when there was a little fire and one of the big cannisters blew. They had masks, sure, but the stuff spread so fast that most of 'em didn't have time to get 'em on.

"Well, like I was sayin', the Adjutant got his men and us—I was there, 'cause I was in the Guard—together. We had to wear full gas suits. One thing he told us. If we smelled cherries, to get the hell out of there."

"Cherries?" Something, a recent memory, came to the back of Taylor's mind, did not quite surface.

"Cherries. The gas was scented with cherries so they could tell if it leaked. Lot of good it did 'em.

"When we went it," Stahl's voice had gone dry, "when we went in, it was . . . like a horror movie, or one of those pictures of hell. Some of 'em were still alive, all with blood all over 'em, theirs or somebody else's. They looked weird, some of 'em in those white lab suits. A couple of 'em attacked us, with knives, glass, their teeth, and a few people got hurt. But there weren't too many left.

"I mean, the people working in that factory had gone plain nuts, went at each other with chairs, nails, teeth. We found one guy disemboweled with a protractor."

Stahl shook his head at the memory and grinned.

"Anyway, that's the sweet story of this place. They buried a few of 'em over in that little woods across the lot, behind where you're parked. County hassled the State until they made the Army take that factory out, and the building had one of those mysterious fires not so long after, burned it to the ground. The lot was vacant for a long time, Army sold off some land, and Coleman put in the depot here."

Taylor's coffee was cold. He sipped it anyway to give his hand something to do.

"Surprised you hadn't heard that story."

"No," said Taylor, "but it's one of the damndest tales I've ever heard."

The story left him with an uneasy feeling, something more than just the horror of it, something he couldn't pin down. He stood up and stretched, bumping the table with his knee. Automatically he checked his watch.

"Thanks for the coffee and the yarn, gotta get back to the dispatcher. They'll be wondering what's happened to me."

"Sure thing. You be careful out there, you hear?"

Taylor laughed and closed the door.

The cold hit him like a wave, but it was stimulating. It also helped clear his mind of the thing that had been bugging him for some time.

The nerve gas had smelled like cherries. And



the goddamned sweet smell that had gone along with the two bizarre incidents he'd had this morning had been, yes, the smell of cherries.

But, he told himself, there was no connection. There *could be* no logical connection. He'd probably imagined the smell, due to some odd mental association. It was the kind of thing that could weigh on a person's mind—if you let it. Taylor would not be fool enough to let it.

Before he went back to his car, Taylor walked behind the trailers to the rear of the lot and on into the small stand of cattails. Outside of a few broken stems from the shotgun blast, there were no traces of the thing he'd seen. Of course there weren't. On his way back he checked each of the trailers, but all were completely empty, or closed, with their small aluminum seals intact.

He walked through the pale moonlight, back to the old Chevy. He started the car and ran the engine for a while to get the heater up, then called in and took a mild chewing-out from the dispatcher. He let the engine run until the car was good and hot, then settled back to watch the lot.

A half hour, the moon rose a little higher in the sky, a funny moon, near full, looking as if someone had just cut a thin sliver off the edge. He saw Stahl leave the terminal and drive away, and fought down the sudden sense of loneliness.

An hour. He checked in. Everything 10-2, 10-4.

Soon it was early morning. A faint trace of frost, unpleasantly like a face, etched across the window. Taylor started the engine, turned on the defroster, melted it away.

He felt fairly confident that the trickster, whoever, had gone home for the night. Taylor slipped into a half-doze, the images of old girl friends, each with their unique, ah, qualities, coming,

He saw something large, winged, grotesque, shuffling across the parking lot toward his car. This was too much. He could only watch it. Suddenly it rushed forward, leaped into the air . . .

as inevitably they did at this hour of the morning. He heard a train pass, and perhaps did fall into a doze momentarily.

Suddenly he was wide awake. The wind had come up, the moon a shade lower. He saw something white. Something large, winged, grotesque, shuffling across the parking lot toward his car.

This was too much. He could only watch it. Suddenly it rushed forward, leaped into the air . . .

Taylor found himself clutching the seat, looking at the open newspaper plastered across the windshield.

The newspaper blew away. One thing about it he had not noticed. The date on the paper had been 1949. November 22, 1949, thirty-two years to the day.

Taylor sighed, reached for the whiskey under the seat. This shift *had* gotten on his nerves a bit, but it would only be a couple of hours until dawn.

Then he heard the footsteps. Running. From behind him, the direction of the woods, coming quickly.

And suddenly he just wanted to be out of there. His hands were shaking, but he did manage to start the car.

The footsteps came up on the passenger side.

In the moonlight he saw . . .

He almost collapsed with relief. The face pressed to the window was that of a young girl. A pretty young girl, smiling and shivering and pointing at the lock on the door.

He unlocked the door and pushed it open.

She tumbled into the seat with a shy laugh, bouncing up and down. She was young, perhaps nineteen, with tousled black hair and bright dark eyes. Her cloth coat, loafers, and white knee socks seemed kind of dated, but somehow this only added to her charm.

"Brrrrr! Am I glad to see you! I never thought I'd find a way back to town!"

"Well," said Taylor, "I can't take you right back, because I'm the security cop here tonight. But I *can* call in and have the dispatcher call you a cab. How would that be?"

"Grrrrreat!"

"What happened, car run out of gas?"

She nodded, frowning.

"I think so. Must have bumped my head or something when it stopped."

She rubbed her forehead briskly. "Ouch! Yep, there's a bruise all right, funny . . ."

Slowly she turned toward Taylor, a look of almost theatrical surprise on her face.

"Yes! I kinda remember . . ."

Her voice went flat on "remember," but he hardly noticed. This girl was pretty indeed! Maybe he could put off calling a cab for a while, say, an hour or two. It wasn't long to dawn. She might like a little breakfast.

She was quiet, watching him with an almost embarrassing intensity. Nervously she pulled up those funny knee socks. He was not, he knew, entirely unattractive, as far as that went. Then for the first time he consciously noticed her perfume, a very faint, sweet scent. Fruity.

Cherries.

Her face contorted, maniacal, teeth bared like a beast.

Long pointed nails streaking for his face.

Cherries.

Taylor screamed and lashed out. The impact of the blow flung her across the seat, against the half-latched passenger door as he jammed the car into gear, still screaming.

The Chevy spun in a full circle in the loose gravel as he fought to straighten it out, not realizing that he had the accelerator all the way to the floor. He was vaguely aware of the passenger door swinging open and slamming shut again as it crashed against a post going through the entrance.

Taylor did not slow until a State trooper racing beside him fired a shot across the hood. By that time, he was halfway through Kentucky.

Slowly he rolled down the window. Somewhere deep inside a touch of rationality surfaced, reminding him of the size of the fine he could well wind up paying. Loss of money is always good for restoring sanity. The voice told him, gathering confidence, that he'd had one hell of a nightmare, a stupid, vivid nightmare, and that now he'd make a total ass of himself as a result.

The trooper flashed his light around the front seat.


"What's the gun doing there?"

"I'm a security cop."

"I'd hate to have you watching *my* place."

He flashed his light back to Taylor's face.

"Shoulda been a race driver, buddy. If you're not sober, your ass is fried." The cop peered closer. "Say what's that on your face? Jesus Christ! You been makin' out with a wildcat, or what?"

But Taylor, whose hand had lightly traced the dried blood from the five deep scratches in his cheek, had fainted. 

TV's Twilight Zone: Part Twenty



CONTINUING MARC SCOTT ZICREE'S
SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE TO THE ENTIRE
TWILIGHT ZONE TELEVISION SERIES,
COMPLETE WITH ROD SERLING'S OPENING
AND CLOSING NARRATIONS

*"You unlock this door with the key of imagination.
Beyond it is another dimension—a dimension of
sound, a dimension of sight, a dimension of mind.
You're moving into a land of both shadow and
substance, of things and ideas. You've just crossed
over into the Twilight Zone."*

132. NINETY YEARS WITHOUT SLUMBERING

Written by Richard deRoy
Based on an unpublished story
by George Clayton Johnson
Producer: William Froug
Director: Roger Kay
Dir. of Photography: Robert W. Pittack
Music: Bernard Herrmann

Cast

Sam Forstmann: Ed Wynn
Marnie Kirk: Carolyn Kearney
Doug Kirk: James Callahan
Dr. Mel Avery: William Sargent
Carol Chase: Carol Byron
Mover #1: Dick Wilson
Mover #2: Chuck Hicks
Policeman: John Pickard

*"Each man measures his time; some
with hope, some with joy, some with
fear. But Sam Forstmann measures
his allotted time by a grandfather's
clock, a unique mechanism whose
pendulum swings between life and
death, a very special clock that keeps
a special kind of time—in the
Twilight Zone."*

Although he is sent to a
psychiatrist, Sam Forstmann
remains unshakable in his conviction
that when the grandfather clock he
has had all his life stops, he will
die. Nevertheless, in order to
appease his granddaughter Marnie



and her husband Doug, he sells the
clock to their neighbor Carol, with
the proviso that he can make
regular maintenance visits. But
when Carol and her husband leave
on vacation, the clock begins to
wind down. On the verge of
hysteria, Sam tries to break into the
house in order to wind it, only to be
stopped by the police. Back home in
his bed, he is resigned to the fact
that he will die momentarily when
the clock stops. The pendulum
slows, then is still. Sam's spirit
leaves his body, informing him it's

time to depart. But Sam has other
ideas. He doesn't believe that
nonsense about the clock—he's been
to a psychiatrist! The spirit—no
more than a figment of Sam's
imagination—disappears. Sam has
triumphed over himself. Or, as he
tells Marnie, "When that clock died,
I was born again."

*"Clocks are made by men, God
creates time. No man can prolong
his allotted hours, he can only live
them to the fullest—in this world
in the Twilight Zone."*

133. RING-A-DING GIRL

Written by Earl Hamner, Jr.
Producer: William Froug
Director: Alan Crosland, Jr.
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: Stock

Cast

Bunny Blake: Maggie McNamara
Hildy Powell: Mary Munday
Bud Powell: David Macklin
Ben Braden: Bing Russell
Mr. Gentry: Hank Patterson
State Trooper: Vic Perrin
Dr. Floyd: George Mitchell
Cici: Betty Lou Gerson
Plot: Bill Hickman

"Introduction to Bunny Blake. Occupation: film actress. Residence: Hollywood, California, or anywhere in the world that cameras happen to be grinding. Bunny Blake is a public figure; what she wears, eats, thinks, says is news. But underneath the glamour, the makeup, the publicity, the build-up, the costuming, is a flesh-and-blood person, a beautiful girl about to take a long and bizarre journey into the Twilight Zone."



Preparing to leave on a flight to a movie location in Rome, Bunny—"the ring-a-ding girl"—receives a present from her hometown fan club. It is the latest addition to her ring collection, but this ring is unique: in its gem, Bunny can see the faces of people she knew back in Howardville, telling her she's needed there. Dropping in on the home of her sister Hildy, Bunny discovers it's the day of the annual

Founder's Day picnic. Seemingly on a whim, she asks Dr. Floyd, chairman of the Founder's Day committee, to postpone the picnic for a day; he refuses. She then goes on tv and announces she will be performing her one-woman show in the school auditorium *today only*—the people of Howardville must choose between going to the picnic or seeing her. Hildy can't understand Bunny's actions, seeing them as merely the selfish acts of a spoiled Hollywood star. Just prior to her performance, though, Bunny disappears. All becomes clear. A jet airliner, bound from Los Angeles to New York, has crashed on the picnic grounds. Thanks to Bunny, most of the people in Howardville are safe in the auditorium. But Bunny herself is dead—she was a passenger on the plane!

"We are all travelers. The trip starts in a place called birth—and ends in that lonely town called death. And that's the end of the journey, unless you happen to exist for a few hours, like Bunny Blake, in the misty regions of the Twilight Zone."

134. YOU DRIVE

Written by Earl Hamner, Jr.
Producer: William Froug
Director: John Brahm
Dir. of Photography: George T. Clemens
Music: Stock

Cast

Oliver Pope: Edward Andrews
Lillian Pope: Hellena Westcott
Pete Radcliff: Kevin Hagen
Policeman: John Hanek
Woman: Totty Ames

"Portrait of a nervous man: Oliver Pope by name, office manager by profession. A man beset by life's problems: his job, his salary, the competition to get ahead. Obviously, Mr. Pope's mind is not on his driving ... Oliver Pope, businessman-turned-killer on a rain-soaked street in the early evening of just another day during just another drive home from the office. The



victim, a kid on a bicycle, lying injured, near death. But Mr. Pope hasn't time for the victim, his only concern is for himself. Oliver Pope, hit-and-run driver, just arrived at a crossroad in his life, and he's chosen the wrong turn. The hit occurred in the world he knows, but the run will lead him straight into—the Twilight Zone."

Pope is determined to keep his guilt a secret—even after the boy dies from his injuries and his co-worker, Pete Radcliff, is mistakenly identified as the hit-and-run driver. But Pope's car has other ideas: late at night, it honks its horn, flashes its lights and blares its radio. When Pope's wife takes it out for a drive, it steers itself to the scene of the accident, then stalls. Finally, when Pope decides to walk to work, the car pursues him, coming within inches of running him down. Realizing he's beaten, Pope gets in the car—and lets it drive him to police headquarters.

"All persons attempting to conceal criminal acts involving their cars are hereby warned: check first to see that underneath that chrome there does not lie a conscience, especially if you're driving along a rain-soaked highway in the Twilight Zone." 17

A Quality of Mercy

by Rod Serling

THE ORIGINAL
TELEVISION SCRIPT
FIRST AIRED ON CBS-TV
DECEMBER 29, 1961



CAST

Lt. Katell/
Lt. Yamuri.....Dean Stockwell
Sgt. Causerano.....Albert Salmi
Japanese Captain...Jerry Fujikawa
Japanese Noncom...Dale Ishimoto
Hansen.....Leonard Nimoy
Watkins.....Rayford Barnes
Hanachek.....Ralph Votrian
Jeep Driver.....Michael Pataki

ACT ONE

FADE ON:

1. STANDARD ROAD OPENING

With vehicle smashing into letters, propulsion into starry night then PAN DOWN TO OPENING SHOT OF PLAY.

2. EXT. HILL TOP PHILIPPINE ISLANDS

A squad of American infantry occupies a small clearing overlooking a scrubby mountain chain. Most of them lie around grabbing the few moments of rest that are luxuries in combat. Sergeant Causerano, a broad-shouldered, thick-set, beard-stubbed soldier, looks out with binoculars toward the distant mountains and reads off directions to a radio operator at his elbow directing mortar fire at a cave several thousand yards away.

3. SHOT THROUGH HIS BINOCULARS OF THE CAVE OPENING

4. CLOSE SHOT SGT. CAUSERANO

As he puts the binoculars down.

5. LONG SHOT OVER HIS SHOULDER

As we see two puffs of

explosions well in front of the cave opening and down from it on the hillside marking its approach.

SGT. CAUSERANO

Short. Five hundred yards.

6. CLOSE SHOT RADIO OPERATOR HANSEN

Into radio.

HANSEN

Five hundred yards short.

That's right. Still.

(he listens for a moment then looks up at the Sergeant)

They say they can't elevate any more.

7. DIFFERENT ANGLE CAUSERANO

As he grabs the radio and talks into it.

CAUSERANO

This is Baker Company. F.O. You've wrecked five acres of rice paddies and you've torn up a beautiful grove of palm trees. What we were trying to figure out is whether there's something in your religion that says you're not supposed to send a shell into a cave?

(a pause)

How's that? Bypass it?

(he grins, nods)

That's more like it. Because all you've accomplished so far is to tear up five acres of real estate and keep a handful of Japanese from sleeping. Has anybody back there ever figured out how long it takes an enemy to die from insomnia?

(he nods into the radio)

All right. We'll keep in touch.

He hands the radio back to

the Operator, shoves a half-smoked cigar into his mouth and looks across to the cave again.

8. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE SOLDIERS LYING AROUND BEHIND HIM

The shot favors three of them in the foreground, WATKINS, HANACHEK, and HANSEN.

WATKINS

(rises up to lean on his elbow)

What goes?

CAUSERANO

They're gonna fire for effect till late this afternoon. Then if they can't smoke them out—they figure to by-pass it.

HANACHEK

(tips his helmet back from his forehead, but doesn't rise from his prone position)

That's what I like to hear!

HANSEN

Amen!

CAUSERANO

(stares across toward cave again)

I'm feelin' better already. When they say flanks—I say thanks. I got no big yen to run head first into anything anymore. Not at this stage of the game.

9. MED. CLOSE SHOT HANACHEK

Who sits up and stares beyond toward the mountain, then toward the Sergeant.

HANACHEK

Would they expect us to go at that thing frontally?

CAUSERANO

Buddy boy, when two air strikes and an afternoon of

A Quality of Mercy

lobbing shells doesn't accomplish anything. Then you can start countin' cartridges. I got a nodding acquaintance with the bottom of this barrel. When they can't budge an enemy with the big stuff—that's when they call out the queen of battle. The ever lovin' infantry.

10. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE GROUP

As they react with little nods of assent.

WATKINS

What do you figure, Sarge?
A month? Maybe less, huh?

CAUSARANO

(shrugs)

We got 'em ringed.

According to all the poop, they're even finished on Okinawa.

(he looks off toward the cave, softly)

The trouble with these little crumbs—they just don't know when they're licked. And yet...

(now his voice is even softer)
And yet... there they hole up in a cave half starved and half beat to death and nobody's there to tell them it's the ninth inning and they've already lost half their ballclub.

(he looks briefly at the rest of the men then back toward cave)

Poor buggers!

11. PAN SHOT ACROSS THE FACES OF THE MEN

As they, too, stare toward the cave. Serling's voice is heard over the shot of the group of soldiers.

SERLING'S VOICE

It's August, 1946. The last grimy pages of a dirty, torn book of war.

WHIP PAN OVER TO SERLING who stands off to one side.

SERLING

The place is the Philippine

Islands. The men are a squad of American infantry whose dulled and tired eyes set deep in dulled and tired faces can now look toward a miracle... that moment when the nightmare appears to be coming to an end. But they've got one more battle to fight. And in a moment we'll observe that battle. August, 1946, Philippine Islands... but in reality... it's high noon... in The Twilight Zone.

FADE TO BLACK:

OPENING BILLBOARD
FIRST COMMERCIAL

FADE ON:

12. EXT. CLEARING DIFFERENT ANGLE THE SQUAD DAY

As they respond to the sound of a jeep pulling up toward their position.

13. LONG SHOT THE JEEP

As it approaches them.

14. CLOSER SHOT THE JEEP

As it enters the clearing and stops. Sitting in the back, perched high and obvious, is Lt. Katell, a twenty-year-old shavetail whose fatigues shine with creased newness. The gold bar of his lieutenantcy shining on the front of his helmet and on his collar. He climbs out of the jeep, looks around at the bearded, dirty, tired-looking men who survey him, yanks at his duffelbag and sends it falling to the ground. He looks briefly over at Hanachek then touches his duffelbag.

15. CLOSE SHOT HANACHEK

Who shoves the helmet down over his face and turns his back to him.

16. CLOSE SHOT LT. KATELL

As he hoists up the duffelbag

and carries it across into the center of the clearing.

17. MOVING SHOT WITH HIM

As he walks, taking in a pearl-handled revolver slung low over his hip.

18. CLOSE SHOT WATKINS

Reacting. Then he turns to Hansen alongside.

WATKINS

(sotto voce)

They sent us a tiger this time.

(with mock, whispered deference)

Check that weapon!

19. DIFFERENT ANGLE KATELL

As he stops, puts down the bag, looks around and finally spots Sgt. Causarano who sits hunched over, smoking a cigar close to the Radio Operator.

KATELL

Which of you is Sergeant Causarano?

20. MED. LONG SHOT CAUSARANO

Who looks up, cigar in his mouth, sticks his thumb against his chest.

CAUSARANO

That would be me.

KATELL

(walking over to him)

I'm Lieutenant Katell. I'm taking over the platoon. What's your situation here?

21. CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

As he slowly eyes the Lieutenant up and down, stops abruptly when he reaches the pearl-handled revolver and reacts.

CUT TO:

22. CLOSE SHOT INSERT REVOLVER

23. BACK TO SCENE

CAUSARANO

We're observing for a



mortar company,
Lieutenant.

(points over his shoulder)
That cave over there.
There's a bunch of Japs
holed up and they've been
trying to get them out for
two days.
(he shakes his head)
Nothing doing.

24. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

He is terribly aware of the
men's eyes on him, wets his
lips, swallows a little and
desperately tries to look
seasoned, knowledgeable and
fearless all at the same time.
He walks up and past
Causarano to stare across the
small rise toward the distant
cave.

KATELL

Your binoculars, please,
Sergeant.

25. TWO SHOT CAUSARANO AND THE RADIO OPERATOR

Who exchange a look.
Causarano thrusts the
binoculars up without even
looking at the Lieutenant.

26. PAN SHOT TO LIEUTENANT

Who takes the binoculars and
stares across at the cave, then
hands the binoculars back to
Causarano.

KATELL

Tough little item. I guess
we'll have to do a little
mopping up by ourselves.

27. CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

Who starts and looks up
surprised.

CAUSARANO
Sir?

28. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

KATELL

I think we'll have to go at it
frontally. Just move right in
there and wipe them out.

29. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE AREA

As Hanachek tips the helmet
up again.

HANACHEK

Hey, Lieutenant—you sure
you got the right platoon?

KATELL

(ignoring him)

What about it, Sergeant?

Where's the rest of the
Company?

CAUSARANO

Back at the C.P.

KATELL

(without missing a beat)

Think we can go it alone?

HANACHEK

(slowly rises to his feet and
squints at the Lieutenant
incredulously)

Say again? Go it alone?

With six men? Begging the
Lieutenant's pardon—you've
just inherited a good group
—but they're not that good.
This is infantry, sir—not
kamikaze.

30. CLOSE SHOT WATKINS

Eyes half-closed as he turns
toward Hansen again.

WATKINS

I told you he's got the
wrong platoon. Now I think
he's got the wrong army.

31. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

He can't ignore this so he
whirls around, his voice a
bark.

KATELL

Your name is what?

32. ANGLE SHOT OVER KATELL'S SHOULDER TOWARD WATKINS AND THE OTHERS

WATKINS

Watkins, Lieutenant.

Andrew J. Watkins.

KATELL

Are you accustomed to
talking to an officer on your
back?

WATKINS

(slowly, lumbering to his feet)
Matter of fact, sir—I'm not
accustomed to talking to an
officer any way. We've lost
our last three platoon Looes
and sometimes there's a
space of time in between.

KATELL

Well, you've got another one
assigned and you're going to
have to learn to live with
him. We'll start off with
this reminder. When you
talk to an officer—you stand
up on your two feet.

33. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE MEN

As they stare at one another.

CAUSARANO

(coming into frame)

We've been on the line
thirty-three days,
Lieutenant. Not much sleep.

KATELL

You have my sympathy,
Sergeant. But my job is to
lead this platoon and I plan
to lead it my way.
(he looks around the group)

When I tell you boys to
jump—you'll jump. When I
tell you to stand up on your
feet you'll do so. And if I
tell you to head toward that
cave, guns port and
bayonets fixed, that's
exactly what you're going to
be doing.

34. PAN SHOT ACROSS THE FACES OF THE MEN

As they stare at him with

A Quality of Mercy

undisguised hostility.

35. CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

CAUSARANO

Begging the Lieutenant's
pardon—

36. CLOSE SHOT KATELL
As he turns to face him.

37. CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

As finally he clamps his
mouth shut and turns away.

CAUSARANO

Your orders, Lieutenant?

38. DIFFERENT ANGLE KATELL

As he walks back over toward
the Radio Operator, walks up
the incline to stare across at
the distant cave.

KATELL

I think we're going to have
to move the company up,
then go ahead and take it.
(a pause as he senses the
silence and turns to
Causarano)

What about it, Sergeant?

CAUSARANO

You want my opinion?

KATELL

I'm willing to discuss it.

CAUSARANO

In chronology, Lieutenant, it
goes like this. First off, you
better muddy up that gold
bar on your helmet and
take off the one on your
collar and stick it in your
pocket. The enemy happens
to be half-starved and half
on its knees, but they're not
dumb. They're tough,
shrewd and they've got
eyes. We've lost three
platoon officers already
because they made a motion
of command with one of
their hands. That's what the
Japs look for. The person in
command.

KATELL

(a little lamely)

I'd intended to remove the
insignia. What about
attacking the cave?

CAUSARANO

Maybe we'll have to
eventually, but the war
don't have to end by dinner
time. Let's sit on it for the
rest of the day and maybe
see what some 105's will do
to it.

39. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

As he turns away, a
little petulant now.

KATELL

Maybe you're right. But it
strikes me we can move in
there and wipe them out
inside of an hour. Get close
enough in to lob grenades
and pulverize them.

40. CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

As the corners of his mouth
crinkle in a semblance of a
grin.

CAUSARANO

(in a low voice)

Lieutenant—how long you
been out here?

41. CLOSE TWO SHOT KATELL AND CAUSARANO

KATELL

(sharply)

What's that got to do with
it?

CAUSARANO

(softly)

Not a whole lot, I suppose.
But you make it sound like
a football game.
(the smile fades)

It ain't a football game,
Lieutenant. It's one long gut
ache with some torn up,
mangled boys and it's gonna
take a long time to forget.
You ain't been shot at yet,
Lieutenant.

(a pause as he looks toward
the cave)

And you ain't shot nobody
yet, either.

KATELL

(still bridling)

You beat me over here,
Sergeant. I'll concede that.
But when it comes to killing
Japanese—I think you'll
find me a pretty efficient
officer.

42. MOVING SHOT WITH HIM

As he walks away from
Causarano, past the group of
soldiers. He pauses in front of
Watkins, picks up his rifle,
looks at it, then throws it
back at Watkins who, almost
taken unawares, has to hold
up his hands to catch it at the
last moment.

KATELL

That's a filthy piece, soldier.
(then turning toward the
others)

I want clean weapons in
this platoon. Because we're
gonna kill Japs. That's my
job. So this outfit better
shape up!

43. CLOSE SHOT HANSEN

HANSEN

(under his breath)

This one's bloodthirsty!

44. CLOSE SHOT HANACHEK

HANACHEK

You don't suppose he'll
want us to scalp them?

45. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

He's heard this, whirls around
to stare at them.

KATELL

No sleep or no guts—which
is it? You tired of killing
Japs, is that it? Or you got
no stomach for it?

Watkins, his face white, starts
to rise. Hanachek reaches over
surreptitiously to touch his
arm. Watkins shakes it off as
he gets to his feet.

WATKINS

We're twenty-four months
up on you, Lieutenant.
We've seen a lot of blood

and heard a lot of screaming. You've got a big yen to do some killing—we'll fall in on order. But don't order enthusiasm. We've seen enough dead men to last us the rest of our lives. The rest of our lives and then some. We'll do some more killing for you, Lieutenant—but don't ask us to cheer!

46. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

His lips clamped tight, he turns away abruptly, walks over toward the Radio Operator and stares toward the cave.

DISSOLVE TO:

47. EXT. CLEARING NIGHT PAN SHOT ACROSS THE MEN

As they lie on the ground. But this time there is no sleeping and no rest. In this war, nighttime is the exclusive property of the Japanese and these men know it. Each has his weapon close alongside.

CUT TO:

48. MED. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

Who squats on the rim looking over toward the cave. Over his shoulder there are distant flashes of shells exploding. The Lieutenant puts down the binoculars.

KATELL

They're still short.
(then his voice a bark)
Causarano?

The Sergeant comes into the frame to stand close alongside.

KATELL

Flamethrowers arrive?

CAUSARANO

(tersely)
Yessir.

KATELL

I figure we could move in behind the next barrage and get within fifty yards of the opening.



Causarano nods and doesn't say anything. Katell turns to stare at him.

KATELL

Those flamethrowers can do damage can't they?

CAUSARANO

(nods again, softly)
They can indeed.

KATELL

What about the phosphorous grenades?

CAUSARANO

I wouldn't want to get hit by one.

KATELL

We'll wait till dawn. Have the rest of the Company move up. Check Battalion for the mortar barrage and then we'll go in there.

(he turns and stares at Causarano, very aware of the other man's silence)

You're gonna have to double-time this one, Sergeant. That is, if you want to keep up with me.

(another silence)

Well?

CAUSARANO

(looking away)
Nothing.

KATELL

(with a grim smile)

I'm not your cup of tea, am I, Sergeant?

CAUSARANO

You got a little too much vinegar for me, Lieutenant.
(then turning toward the cave)
We could bypass it. There aren't twenty Japs in there.

Most of them are sick or half-starved.

KATELL

(a little surprised)
But they're Japs.

CAUSARANO

(very thoughtfully)
They're men.

KATELL

(reacting, stares at Causarano through the darkness and shakes his head, surprised)

You got a funny group here, Sergeant. And you're the oddball of the bunch. You'll forgive an observation, but the way I size you up is that you've either got battle fatigue or you're chicken.

49. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

As his eyes rise to meet the Lieutenant's.

CAUSARANO

Maybe neither. Maybe a little of both. I don't know. But the way I size you up, Lieutenant, is—

KATELL

(interrupting)

Go ahead. How do you size me up, Causarano?

CAUSARANO

A pea-green shavetail right out of the Panhandle and scared to death he won't bag his limit. Or worse—all shook up because he's afraid somebody'll peg him as a Johnny-come-lately instead of a rough-tough killer.

A Quality of Mercy

KATELL

(tersely and grimly)

I think that should do it—

CAUSARANO

You ask—you get told. You wanna prove your manhood, Lieutenant, but it's too late in the day to have many choices on how to do it. It's down to one lousy cave full of sick, pitiful, half-dead losers—and a platoon of dirty, tired men who've got their craw full of this war.

KATELL

(thin lippled, white faced with fury)

You're a lousy soldier, Causarano. And that goes for this platoon of poor, sensitive, sad, sick boys you want us to bottle-feed. Did somebody forget to tell you that when you fight a war you fight a war and you kill until you're ordered to stop killing?

CAUSARANO

(very gently, his voice tired and old)

I got the message,

Lieutenant. Roger wilco.

(then a pause and he shakes his head)

The miserable fact being that there's always somebody like you who squeaks in just before they close the door and has to grind an ax before he gives that final order.

He shoves the cigar in his mouth, slings his rifle over his shoulder and walks away. Halfway back to the group of men who have been watching and listening, he stops, turns back toward Katell.

CAUSARANO

What's your pleasure, Lieutenant? How many have to die before you get satisfied?

51. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

Whose mouth twitches. He

turns, picks up the binoculars, stares out toward the cave, puts them down.

KATELL

Off hand . . . I'd say all of them! I don't care where they are or who they are . . . if they're the enemy—they get it! First day of the war or last day of the war—they get it!

He looks briefly back toward the group of men.

52. PAN SHOT ACROSS THEIR FACES

As they stare at him.

53. REVERSE ANGLE LOOKING TOWARD HIM

As he turns, picks up the binoculars again.

CUT TO:

54. EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT OF HIM

Looking through binoculars. As he starts to lower them they slip and fall to the ground.

55. WHIP PAN DOWN TO GROUND FOR EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT OF THE BINOCULARS

At this moment it becomes day instead of night and a hand comes into the frame to pick the binoculars up and a voice is heard offscreen:

NONCOM

Lieutenant Yamuri—you dropped your glasses, sir.

The hand moves up with the binoculars as we

CUT TO:

56. CLOSE SHOT JAPANESE SOLDIER

As seen over the shoulder of Katell, this time dressed in the uniform of a Japanese officer. He takes the binoculars, turns very slowly until he's facing the camera. It is Katell, but with the features and uniform of a Japanese. The CAMERA ZOOMS INTO HIS FACE as

absolute bewilderment and fear engulf him. He stares left and right, looks at the binoculars, looks around.

CUT TO:

57. LONG SHOT SQUAD OF SOLDIERS

In much the same position as the Americans. They are all Japanese.

58. WHIP PAN BACK OVER TO SHOT OF KATELL (YAMURI)

Who suddenly drops the binoculars.

59. CLOSE SHOT BINOCULARS

As this time they hit a rock and break.

60. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP TOWARD KATELL (YAMURI)

Who, eyes wide, features working and contorted, suddenly breaks off and starts to run.

CUT TO:

61. LONG SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

As he races over the parapet, down the hill toward the cave.

CUT TO:

62. LONG SHOT THE JAPANESE SOLDIERS

Who watch aghast.

63. DIFFERENT LONG ANGLE OF KATELL (YAMURI)

As he races away from them toward the cave.

CUT TO:

64. CLOSER ANGLE OF HIM

As he gets within a few hundred yards of the opening of the cave and suddenly is forced to fling himself headfirst down on the ground, as a fusillade of bullets greets him from the opening of the cave.

65. CLOSE SHOT OF HIM ON THE GROUND

As he inches his head up to



stare across toward the cave.

66. LONG SHOT ACROSS TO CAVE

There is an American soldier, one arm in a sling, the other carrying a Thompson submachine gun. On his head is the old-time, World War I helmet.

67. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

As again his eyes go wide and he stares incredulously at this apparition.

68. CLOSE SHOT THE CAVE

As bullets start to smash against the top of the rock just above the American soldier who ducks inside.

69. LONG SHOT THE HILL

Where the Japanese have set up a machine gun and are firing toward the cave.

70. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

As he rises to his hands and knees and looks from cave to hilltop, totally undecided as to which direction he should move.

71. ANOTHER TIGHTER ANGLE OF HIM

As again he freezes motionless, staring at something a few feet away.

72. TOP HAT WHIP PAN ACROSS THE GROUND

To an old ammo crate, half destroyed, which lies tilted and partly buried in the ground.

73. ZOOMAR INTO TIGHT CLOSE SHOT

Stenciled lettering on the side. It reads "3rd Battalion, 18th Regiment, Corregidor."

SLOW FADE TO BLACK:

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

74. EXT. CLEARING LONG ANGLE SHOT OF KATELL (YAMURI)

As he moves up the hill. Behind him we can see the tall, vast, rocky fortress that looms up and is obviously Corregidor.

75. MED. CLOSE SHOT THE GROUP OF JAPANESE

As they stand aside making a path for Katell as he walks past them. The Japanese Noncom steps forward.

NONCOM

Lieutenant Yamuri, sir?

Katell (Yamuri) stops and stares at him.

NONCOM

That was . . . that was exceedingly brave, sir. Trying to get at the Americans like that and single-handedly.

He looks toward the other Japanese who nod their assent, but still look somewhat dazed by what has happened.

76. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

As he stares at the Noncom.

KATELL (YAMURI)
The Americans? The Americans in the cave?

77. CLOSE SHOT NONCOM
As he reacts, bewildered.

NONCOM

Yes sir. We figure there are twenty or thirty of them in there. Most of them wounded.

(he wets his lips)

Are you . . . are you all right, sir?

78. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

KATELL (YAMURI)

Where are we? Who are you?

79. CLOSE SHOT NONCOM
As again he stares at him.

NONCOM

Who am I, sir? Sergeant Yamazaki.

(a pause as he looks a little surreptitiously toward the others then back to Katell [Yamuri])

Are you all right, Lieutenant? Are you feeling well?

80. TWO SHOT NONCOM AND KATELL (YAMURI)

KATELL (YAMURI)
(reaching out and grabbing him)

Where are we? I asked you a question. Where are we?

NONCOM

(taken aback)

Why . . . why Corregidor, sir.

81. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

Reacting.

82. MED. CLOSE SHOT GROUP OF SOLDIERS

As they stare at him silently and wonderingly.

83. REVERSE ANGLE THEIR P.O.V. LOOKING TOWARD KATELL

A Quality of Mercy

KATELL (YAMURI)

(In a whisper)

Corregidor? How in the—
(he looks away again)

Corregidor? When?

84. FULL SHOT

NONCOM

When, sir? You mean what
is the day's date?

(a pause)

May 4th, sir.

(then looking questioningly
toward the other soldiers,
reacts to their nods of assent,
faces Katell again and repeats)

May 4th, sir.

KATELL (YAMURI)

(shakes his head back and
forth)

It can't be May. It's August.

Don't you understand? It's

August. It's August the 8th.

NONCOM

I humbly ask the
Lieutenant to forgive me

... but I must correct him.

The date is May 4th.

KATELL (YAMURI)

On Corregidor.

(then loudly and appalled)

Corregidor?

(he takes a few steps away,
whirls around to stare at
them)

Corregidor when? May 4th
when? What year?

NONCOM

The year 1942, sir. Is the

... is the Lieutenant all
right? Perhaps ... perhaps
a touch of the malaria.

85. DIFFERENT ANGLE

KATELL (YAMURI)

As he looks down first at his
hands then at his uniform.

KATELL (YAMURI)

What did you call me? You
called me something? You
called me by a name—

NONCOM

(totally nonplussed now)

Lieutenant Yamuri, sir. I

called you Lieutenant

Yamuri: I called you by

your name, sir.

Again Katell (Yamuri) looks
down at himself, shaking his
head again back and forth,
then looking up wild-eyed, his
voice building gradually.

KATELL (YAMURI)

No. No! NO!

86. CLOSER SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

As he sinks down to his knees
and kneels there with his head
down, sobbing, shaking his
head back and forth and
finally flinging himself face-
first down into the dirt, as he
repeats over and over again.

KATELL (YAMURI)

What's happened to me?

What's going on here?

What's happened?

His voice breaks off as a cloth-
wrapped leg comes into the
frame to stand close alongside
Katell (Yamuri). Katell
(Yamuri) slowly looks around
and up.

87. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP AT CAPTAIN NAKAGAWA

A stern faced, all-army
Japanese officer who stares
down at Katell (Yamuri) with
undisguised impatience and
anger.

CAPTAIN

Yamuri? Are you sick?

Katell (Yamuri) closes his eyes
and looks away.

CAPTAIN

I require an answer,
Lieutenant. I asked you if
you were sick. We will be
moving out shortly. If you
are too ill to move—we shall
leave you here.

KATELL (YAMURI)

(looks up very slowly)

Leave ... leave me here?

CAPTAIN

We have no transport for
the wounded, Lieutenant, as
you well know. We will very
shortly move up—and you
shall remain here.

Katell (Yamuri) slowly pulls
himself to his hands and
knees, then very weakly
tumbles over to lie on his back,
staring up.

KATELL (YAMURI)

My name isn't Yamuri. I
swear to you. Something
... something's happened.
My name isn't Yamuri. My
name is—

He stops abruptly and his
mouth is clamped shut.

CUT TO:

88. ANGLE SHOT LOOKING UP AT THE VARIOUS JAPANESE SOLDIERS

Who stand around, each of
them armed and each face is a
grim mask full of resolve and
purpose, dispassionate but a
cold, calculating dispassion.
The CAMERA PANS DOWN to
a shot of one of their weapons
as it is held at port, a .25 long
rifle pointed menacingly in
Katell's (Yamuri's) direction.

CUT TO:

89. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

As he slowly rises to his feet.

KATELL (YAMURI)

I'm ... I'm all right.

Forgive me, sir—I—

CAPTAIN

You what?

KATELL (YAMURI)

(running his hand over his
face)

I was ... I was feverish for
a moment. I forgot where I
was. I'm ... I'm all right
now.

CAPTAIN

You're sure?

KATELL (YAMURI)

(hurriedly)

Yes, sir, I'm sure. I'm very
sure.

CAPTAIN

(partly assuaged, he nods
tersely, turns away)

Sergeant, we move out in fifteen minutes.
(then looking off toward rocks)
Unfortunately, the artillery was unable to do its job. We shall attack the cave in force.

NONCOM

Yes, sir.
(he turns toward the men)
Ready to move out in fifteen minutes.

The soldiers start picking up their equipment and weapons. Some start to fix bayonets.

90. CLOSE SHOT NONCOM

As he too starts to prepare his weapon, ramming a clip of ammo into it then pulling back the bolt and then thrusting it forward. He walks over to where a Japanese machine gun is being assembled, checks it for a moment, then nods his approval to the gunner. He turns and goes toward the Captain.

NONCOM

Prisoners, sir?

91. MED. GROUP SHOT

CAPTAIN

(looking up sharply)
What?

NONCOM

Are we to take prisoners if any surrender?

CAPTAIN

(shrugs)
If any do—I suppose we can.

(he looks toward Katell [Yamuri] who stands there like a zombie)

Yamuri—you will take the First Section, move forward as quickly as you can, drop down fifty yards in front of the opening. Watch for my signal. We will cover you with automatic fire for two or three minutes before you make the actual attack. Then Sections Two and Three will follow you in. Understood?



KATELL (YAMURI)

(nods numbly)

Yes, Sir.

CAPTAIN

I didn't hear you.

KATELL (YAMURI)

(louder)

I understand, sir.

Katell (Yamuri) walks a little aimlessly toward the center of the group then stops and looks questioningly around. The Noncom touches his arm and points to one group off to the side.

NONCOM

(softly)

Your section, sir.

Katell (Yamuri) nods, moves over to it. The men give way for him, but eye him suspiciously as they do.

92. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI) AND NONCOM

As he turns very slowly to stare toward the rock. He looks over toward the Noncom standing close by.

KATELL (YAMURI)

You said . . . you said something about there being wounded in there.

NONCOM

I think so, Lieutenant.

When they ran inside they were carrying each other. I don't think there are more than twenty or thirty men inside. It shouldn't be too difficult.

93. CLOSER SHOT

KATELL (YAMURI)

As he stares toward the cave again.

KATELL (YAMURI)

(softly, under his breath)

Americans. Twenty or thirty . . . Americans.

CAPTAIN'S VOICE

(clipped, precise, nasal, unpleasant)

I didn't hear what you said, Yamuri. What did you just say?

94. TWO SHOT KATELL (YAMURI) AND CAPTAIN

KATELL (YAMURI)

(turns toward him)

If they're wounded, sir, perhaps—

CAPTAIN

Perhaps what?

KATELL

(hesitant now)

Perhaps if we gave them a chance to surrender or—

CAPTAIN

Or what?

KATELL

Or perhaps left them there. Bypassed them.

95. CLOSE SHOT CAPTAIN

Who stares at Katell (Yamuri) his face a mask.

CAPTAIN

(very softly)

Bypass them, Lieutenant? Is that tactical . . . ?

(then much louder)

Or is that some sudden little nugget of compassion you have unearthed in your fever.

96. TWO SHOT

KATELL (YAMURI)

(very slowly)

They are . . . they're

A Quality of Mercy

wounded. They can't do us much harm.

CAPTAIN

Neither can they sink a battleship ... but we nevertheless have to destroy them.

(a pause)

A reminder, Lieutenant. The identity of the men in the cave—they are Americans. They are enemy. Wounded, healthy, walking or lying—they are the enemy. The Japanese army does not bypass. The Japanese army attacks. The Japanese army wipes out its opponents.

KATELL (YAMURI)

(desperation creeping in)

They're wounded. They're beaten and they're wounded.

97. CLOSE SHOT THE CAPTAIN

His face freezes.

CAPTAIN

Lieutenant Yamuri ... odd that you should require this reminder. But the comparative health and well-being of the enemy ... his comfort or his discomfort ... the degree of his anguish or his incapacities have no more bearing on a military action, a tactical move or a decision of command than the fortunes of an anthill that you step on when we move out to attack.

(now his voice almost a screech)

They are enemy. They are Americans. If when we enter the cave they are lying on the ground—

(he whips out his sword)

I can assure you I will have no more compunction about making them a head shorter than I would stepping on that anthill.

98. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

As he shakes his head back

and forth, beyond any instinct for self-preservation.

KATELL (YAMURI)

They are ... they are men.

99. CLOSE TWO SHOT

CAPTAIN

(almost pounding on him)

They are enemy and this is war and in war you kill. (he grabs Katell [Yamuri] and shakes him)

You kill, Lieutenant. You kill until you are ordered to stop killing.

(then screeching, screaming, his face an inch away from Katell's [Yamuri's])

You kill until you are ordered to stop killing!

KATELL (YAMURI)

(roars back at him)

NO!

100. DIFFERENT CLOSE ANGLE

As the Captain hauls back and backhands Katell (Yamuri) across the face, the force of the blow and its unexpectedness smashing Katell (Yamuri) backwards to the ground.

CUT TO:

101. HIS MOMENT OF IMPACT AS HE HITS THE GROUND

Alongside are the broken binoculars. He just lies there, blood trickling from his mouth as the Captain's voice is heard offscreen.

CAPTAIN'S VOICE

Sections assemble! Sergeant Yamazaki, you will handle First Section. Sergeant Hino, take the Second Section. Lieutenant Ishimoto, yours is the Third Section. All right ... we move out ...

102. ANGLE SHOT

As the soldiers start to file out of the clearing.

103. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE CAPTAIN

He and the Noncom are the last men in the line. The Noncom turns to look back toward Katell (Yamuri) lying on the ground, then looks questioningly at the Captain.

CAPTAIN

I will attend to him, Sergeant, when we return.

104. CLOSE SHOT KATELL (YAMURI)

Beaten beyond any kind of action now. He merely turns his head to look toward the Captain, partly rises.

KATELL (YAMURI)

Captain ... what you do to those men in the cave ... will it shorten the war by a week? By a day? By an hour?

(he shakes his head)

May I ask the Captain ... what is his pleasure? How many have to die before he gets satisfied?

105. ZOOMAR INTO CLOSE SHOT CAPTAIN

CAPTAIN

Offhand, Lieutenant Yamuri ... I would say all of them. I don't care where they are or who they are ... if they're the enemy—they are to be destroyed. First day of the war or last day of the war—we destroy them!

106. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

As these words sink in and the familiarity of them takes hold. He slowly sinks back to a prone position and in doing so, his hand touches the binoculars.

107. CLOSE SHOT THE BINOCULARS

As his hand reaches over to them and grabs them. The CAMERA MOVES IN FOR AN EXTREMELY TIGHT CLOSE SHOT of his hand and at this moment it is once again night. CAMERA PULLS BACK



QUICKLY and we are on a shot of the clearing as it was before. Katell is once again himself. Causarano is alongside, smoking a cigar.

108. CLOSE TWO SHOT CAUSARANO AND KATELL

CAUSARANO

Anytime you say,
Lieutenant.

(bitterly)

Form lines for the duck
shoot.

KATELL

Wait a minute . . . hold up.
(he looks off toward the cave)

Causarano . . . something
. . . something happened -

At this moment there is the
distant NOISE OF WHEELS as
a voice is suddenly heard.

VOICE (offscreen)

Jeep on the road. Hold fire.

Both Causarano and Katell rise
(he looks off toward the cave)
The driver jumps out.

DRIVER

Lieutenant Katell here?

Katell points to himself, but
for a moment is unable to
speak.

CAUSARANO

He's right here.

DRIVER

You're to pull off the hill,
Lieutenant.

CAUSARANO

Who says?

DRIVER

Colonel Haugén says.

Haven't you guys heard?

The men start to crowd
around him.

DRIVER

Air Force dropped a bomb
on Japan this morning. A
big one. The granddaddy of
every bomb ever made. They
call it an atomic bomb.

CAUSARANO

What about it?

DRIVER

What about it is that they
figure this is gonna end the
war inside of a few hours.
All units are going to pull
back and wait it out. See
what happens.

109. CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

As he smiles, looks around the
faces of the men who smile
back at him.

CAUSARANO

All right, boys. On your feet
and let's get ready to move
out!

110. DIFFERENT ANGLE THE MEN

As they pick up their packs,
sling their weapons over their
backs and form a ragged line.

111. CLOSE SHOT CAUSARANO

As he turns to look at Katell.

CAUSARANO

How about it, Lieutenant?
You with us?

112. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

As he looks toward the cave,

then back toward the Sergeant.

KATELL

(very softly)

I'm with you.

But still remains standing
there looking toward the cave.

113. DIFFERENT ANGLE CAUSARANO

As he walks over to him and
stands close.

CAUSARANO

Something, Lieutenant?

KATELL

Yeah . . . yeah, something.

CAUSARANO

I wouldn't fret.

(he nods toward the cave)

There'll probably be other
wars, other caves.

(then with an undisguised
grimness)

Other human beings you
can knock off.

114. CLOSE SHOT KATELL

As he turns to look at
Causarano, tears in his eyes.

KATELL

I hope not. God help us . . .
I hope not.

115. LONG SHOT THE INFANTRY

As they start to move out. We
hear Serling's voice.

SERLING'S VOICE

"The quality of mercy is not
strained, it droppeth as the
gentle rain from Heaven
upon the place beneath. It
blesseth him that gives and
him that takes."

Shakespeare. The Merchant
of Venice. But applicable to
any moment in time. To any
group of soldiery. To any
nation on the face of the
earth. Or . . . as in this case
. . . to the Twilight Zone.

FADE TO BLACK

THE END

In December's TZ . . .



- A child's toy seeks deadly vengeance in **LIVING DOLL**, the classic *Twilight Zone* episode starring Telly Savalas. TZ presents the original script by Charles Beaumont, complete with photos from the show.
- The man who brought you *Alien* and *Blade Runner* tells how he saw the future . . . and made it work. A revealing TZ Interview with director Ridley Scott.
- What has *Alien* spawned? It's **XTRO**, a chilling new British horror film in which a monster from space settles down here on Earth and behaves . . . monstrously! TZ gives you a full-color preview of a creature that, if he saw E.T., would eat him.
- Pamela Sargent brings terror into the home in a supernatural masterpiece, **THE SHRINE**. Plus a choice assortment of new stories that range from the horrifying to the hilarious—including **PULPMEISTER**, **WHAT REALLY**

HAPPENED TO UNCLE CHUCKLES?, and **ALTENMOOR**, WHERE THE DOGS DANCE.

- L.P. Hartley, author of *The Go-Between*, penned supernatural tales of unusual elegance and wit. Jack Sullivan profiles this too-little-known master of the macabre, followed by one of Hartley's most memorable tales: **W. S.**
- Magic is for sale—right down the street. You can change your life, destroy your enemies, and maybe even turn yourself into an irresistible lover. **Matthew Kovary**, camera in hand, explores the world of over-the-counter occult.
- Gahan Wilson casts a cold eye at **TRON** and **Thomas Disch** prepares you for this winter's reading. Plus cartoons, a tough new horror quiz, and another chapter of **Marc Scott Zicree's SHOW-BY-SHOW GUIDE to The Twilight Zone**. All for just two dollars in December's TZ.